

**KARSONDAS MULJI**

**Issued for the Karsondas Mulji  
Centenary Celebration Committee,  
Bombay.**

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**DEDICATED**  
**TO**  
**THE SACRED MEMORY**  
**OF**  
**SIR JOSEPH ARNOULD, Kt.,**

The noble Judge of the Supreme Court of Bombay, whose lucid judgment in the Maharaja Libel Case thoroughly vindicated the righteousness of the crusade, in the cause of Truth and Purity in religion, against the most immoral practices prevalent in the Vaishnava Sect of Vallabhacharya, waged so vehemently against heavy odds, with the help of a band of zealous and earnest reformers of all communities by

**KARSONDAS MULJI**

whose illustrious career, full of valiant deeds of reform, is described in the following pages.

**THE KARSONDAS MULJI CENTENARY  
CELEBRATION COMMITTEE.**

**KARSONDAS MULJI**

**A**

**BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY**



**BY**

**B. N. Motiwala,**

**B. A., LL. B.**

**FOREWORD**

**BY**

**Diwan Bahadur K. M. Jhaveri,**

**M. A., LL. B.**



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## PREFACE.

Hero-worship has been universally recognised as an essential ingredient in the nation-building process. Like all countries, India too has practised this quality. From ancient times Hindus have been worshipping their great religious heroes like Shri Ramchandra and Shri Krishna. It is a fortunate circumstance that Indians have this highly useful quality in abundance. What is needed, to suit the times, is merely to widen its scope. It is imperative to have our hero-worship extended to social, moral and intellectual spheres. The sad result of this one-sided development has been that in India biographical literature is poor. Till now, the biographies of the greatest Indians like Dadabhai Nowroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade and others have not been written as they ought to be. The late Mr. G. K. Gokhale intended to write the biography of his Guru, Ranade, but his poor health prevented him from doing so. In my humble way, I attempted to have a biography of the late Dadabhai written by an eminent Parsi Professor, and the late Mr. Gokhale had promised to revise it; but unfortunately untoward circumstances came in the way of the fructification of my cherished plan. This dearth of biographical literature accounts for the sad deficiency in our country of the existence of heroes in different walks of life. It is through biographies that young men can learn unconsciously the art of life. When such is the deplorable state of our people as a whole, there is no wonder if the Gujaratis, as a class, lag behind. Gujarat has had very few outstanding personalities. One of such was the late Karsondas Mulji. All Gujaratis should feel greatly indebted to the late Rao Saheb Mahipatram

Rupram for the short Gujarati biography of Karsondas. But for this, Gujaratis would have entirely lost every trace of the greatness of their great man. Even at present, this biography is not available. The dead great men are our precious treasures. They constitute the rich heritage of our country. But the careers of illustrious Gujaratis appeal to the imagination of the Gujarat youth in a much more impressive manner.

I do not know how far I have succeeded in my delineation of Karsondas's personality. I wish some Gujarati eminent man of letters had essayed this important work; but finding none in the field, I have ventured, with what result I leave the readers to judge. Gujarat sadly needs many Karsondases. My esteemed friend the late Sir Gokuldas Kahandas Parekh, speaking about Indians, before a session of the Indian National Social Conference, said: "I think it is generally admitted that our social edifice, as it exists, is not in good order. We are riddled by customs that prevent our physical development, that are the causes of many ailments and bodily infirmities that weaken our energies, lower our vitality and shorten our lives, by customs that prevent our intellectual development by placing obstacles in the way of acquiring learning and knowledge of arts and sciences and their application, and by customs which bring on moral degeneration by making us indifferent to the claims of justice, equality and charity, by narrowing the range of our sympathies and making us apathetic to the wretchedness and misery into which we find a large number of our countrymen and countrywomen steeped. The problem of the social reformers is to see how to get rid of these customs." If this version is true of Indians as a whole, it is in a far

greater degree true of the Gujaratis. We are a custom-ridden community, and we need to extricate ourselves from the tyrannical sway of unreasoning customs. India's urgent need is to have amongst us many men who will take upon themselves the rôle of the breakers of chains of useless, harmful customs which retard the growth of all-round national progress. Karsondas was one of such iconoclasts.

It is again a sad thing to notice that, unlike men of other countries, Indians in different walks of life, do not leave behind them sufficient biographical material for their relatives or friends or admirers to weave out of the same, connected life-stories of their heroes. In this respect, the late Dadabhai Nowroji was an illustrious exception. Public workers, in the interests of the forward progress of humanity, should not fail in this matter.

Unfortunately for India, people's interest in social reform has considerably fallen. This is not a desirable state of things, when we know that the ground to be covered in the social field alone is too vast. For national uplift, progress in all directions is quite necessary; and to accelerate the progress, which at present is very slow, we need many young men of character and of burning enthusiasm. To fire the hearts and minds of young men to come forward for discharging their social obligations is essential; for this, we need to present before them lives of great Indians of thought and action in different spheres of life. Our dead heroes, the fruits of whose pioneer labours we are enjoying at present, need better treatment at our hands. The late Karsondas Mulji was specially an asset of the Gujaratis. He lived his short life

virtuously and utilized his talents to the best of his power in the position in which he was placed. His life was a beacon light in those dark times. He was truly educated, and he utilized his education to the best advantage for the good of his community. Like an honest debtor to his country, he most honourably discharged his debt, by consecrating selflessly his energies to the progress of his motherland. It is with a view both to preserve the memory of the great and good Karsondas, and to kindle the latent burning fire in the hearts of young Gujaratis that I place this book before YOUNG GUJARAT, being the result of my study of one of Gujarat's great sons.

Some years ago, the Hon. Mr. G. A. Natesan had requested me to write a short sketch of Karsondas's life for his series of Indian Reformers. At that time, I had made some preparation, but was not fortunate enough to complete the same. The movement to celebrate Karsondas Centenary again inspired me to do my duty, as an humble admirer of Karsondas, by presenting before the English-knowing Gujaratis, a study of Karsondas's life and career. My revered father, the late Mr. Narondas Culliandas Kirparam, was a friend and admirer of Karsondas. I find his name as one of the eight signatories of the public Address given to the late Karsondas Mulji, in 1863, on behalf of the "Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha". I deemed it my sacred duty to present to the Centenary Celebration Committee the result of my humble labour. I am very much indebted to this Committee for having kindly accepted my offer of presenting the manuscript of this book to them for publication, and to its Chairman, Diwan Bahadur Krishnalal Mohanlal Jhaveri, for writing a Foreword.

I have mentioned in Chapter III that I failed to secure from any one a single original letter written in Karsondas's own hand. However, since those words were written and printed I was fortunately able to secure from Rao Saheb Maganlal Dalpatram Khakkhar a letter written by Karsondas to his friend, the late Rao Saheb Dalpatram Khakkhar, in his own hand, a facsimile of which is printed in this volume.

I also express my thanks to Mr. P. G. Kanekar, who has, at considerable pains, helped me in revising and correcting the proofs of this book.

The chapters of this book constitute a series of Centenary lectures. The first chapter, however, gives a bird's eye view of the whole life of Karsondas and was published as a pamphlet at the time of the Centenary Celebration. The other chapters deal in detail with the different aspects of Karsondas's career. The incidents of Karsondas's life are so handled as to present before the young readers, an art of life, which they can learn easily when it is presented in a practical way. I have attempted to present this study of a great man's life fully trusting that its perusal will inspire present-day young Indians, especially Gujaratis, to follow Karsondas's example. "The true heirs of a great man," as Renan says, "are not his kinsmen in blood, but those who continue his work."

The all-round progress of India is slow; to make it speedy, our country greatly needs the presentation of life-stories of great men as is done by Messrs. Watts and Co., London.

May many Karsondases rise in my country, is my fervent prayer to God!

Cullindas House,  
The Ridge, Malabar Hill. }  
Bombay, 10th September 1935. }

B. N. MOTIVALA.

## FOREWORD.

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The celebration of Karsondas Mulji's Centenary served many useful purposes. One of them was the delivery of a comprehensive series of lectures on his life and work by Mr. Motivala, who had studied the subject with an enthusiasm worthy of the cause to which Karsondas had devoted all his too-short life. It is these lectures which now appear in book-form. They practically state everything worth knowing about him.

The poet sings of "Foot prints on the sands of time", which means that the shifting sands obliterate them in the course of time, and therefore, unless there are "reminders" in some form or other—in the form of centenaries, commemoration volumes, statues, pictures, etc.—of the individual leaving the "footprints" behind, the inspiration that should come from that individual's valuable life-work,—to "make our lives sublime"—would gradually fade away. And India cannot afford to do so, as in recent times there have been so few of such towering personalities, that the utmost efforts are necessary to keep the lamp of social reform work lit by them burning. Karsondas in his days was one such towering personality, why, even in the present times he would still be a shining light, because of the sterling qualities he possessed. They were such that with them he would have succeeded anywhere else than in Bombay and Gujarat. His fight against the forces of unrighteousness and corruption in the practice of religion was so cleanly fought that success was bound to come, in Bombay or elsewhere. He had the courage of conviction and the sincerity of a conscientious man, and that carried the day

for him. The following pages reveal on almost every page the insurmountable difficulties that faced the young reformer. Virile orthodoxy, immense wealth, questionable influences due to wealth and due to the then unholy headship of a very widely revered religious order, all stared him in the face, and but for the administration of even justice at the hands of a British Indian Court young Karsondas would have been swept off his feet and down a precipice, never to be able to stand up again.

When a reformer like Karsondas launches on a campaign of reform, he does not rest content with working in one direction only. Cognate branches thereof naturally fall within his purview: educational reform, widow remarriage reform and other equally important matters were therefore naturally taken up by him, and there too he met with a measure of success.

It is not the object of these few lines to anticipate what the writer has to say. For that the reader is referred to the contents of the book. The assiduity which the author has displayed in the achievement of his purpose will be apparent to the most casual reader. A due appreciation of the same and a determination to follow Karsondas's ideal will amply reward the labours of Mr. Motivala.

BOMBAY,  
10th September 1935.

} KRISHNALAL M. JHAVERI

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# CHRONOLOGY

## OF

### KARSONDAS'S LIFE.

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1832               | Born in Bombay on 25th July.  |
| 1838<br>to<br>1843 | Studied in the Primary Vernacular School.   |
| 1847               |   |
| 1848               | Entered the Government Gujarati School and finished its course within 9 months.   |
| 1848               | Married Valibai (first marriage). Entered an English School. Karsondas's mother's sister Prankore died; and his young aunt became a widow.  |
| 1848<br>to<br>1851 | Studied in the English School.  |
| 1852               |   |
| 1852               | Valibai-Karsondas's first wife died.  |
| 1853               | Commenced to write an essay on widow re-marriage; wrote articles on social subjects in the weekly paper "Rast Gofar" and in periodicals; and wrote an essay on "The Advantages of Foreign Travel" and read it before a public meeting of the "Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha."  |
| 1855               | Started the first cheap weekly paper called "Satya Prakash" or "The Light of Truth," and edited and managed it without any remuneration, for the benefit of the Hindus.   |
| 1856               | Was appointed a member of the Managing Committee of the "Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha." Got published 500 copies of his book called "Niti Sangrah". Was appointed Head Master of the English School at Deesa. On 27th December, an Address was presented to him by the Sabha Gujaratis, for the first time, met and honoured Karsondas. |
| 1857               | Served for ten months as Head Master of the English School at Deesa. On 25th January, advertised for a Prize Essay on the subject of the relationship between a Guru  |

- and his disciples. Married second time; but the second wife died within six months of marriage. In December, married for the third time. At Deesa, founded a Society called "Niti Bodhak Sabha"; and started a monthly periodical called "Niti Bodhak". Entrusted the editorship of the "Satya Prakash", during his absence, to Messrs. Mahipatram Rupram and Zaverilal Umiashanker.
- 1858 Worked for 9 months as the Editor of the "Rast Gofar." For nine months, entrusted the editorship of the "Satya Prakash" to Mr. Tribhowandas Dwarkadas, the Editor of the "Satya Dipak".
- 1859 First time published his book called "Niti Vachan" and dedicated it to Sheth Mangaldas Nathooobhai. Edited a Gujarati magazine from April 1859. Edited a paper called "Mumbaina Bazar" issued at the time of the departure of the China Mail from Bombay. Started with partners, a Chinese cloth shop, and continued the same for six years.
- 1860 Continued editing "Stri Bodh." Edited a paper called "Swadharna Bodhak tatha Pakhand Khandak" or "Adviser of our own religion and destroyer of false religion". Published his book called "Sanear Sukha". Commenced Gujarati-English Dictionary, on 21st October, 1860; wrote the famous article on "The Original Religion of the Hindus and the Present Heterodox Opinions". This article was the subject matter of the Maharaja Libel Case. Accompanied his friend Kavi Narmadasankar to a religious public discussion on the subject of "Hinda Widows and Hindu bhastras" with Jadunathji Brijratanji Maharaj of Surat. Continued editing the "Stri Bodh." Published two periodicals known as "Vidhwani Arji" and "Maharaj vishe Chabka"
- 1855 } Edited the "Satya Prakash," barring nineteen months,  
to } and wrote in 198 issues of the Paper having 500  
1860 } subscribers.
- 1861 Till May of this year, edited the "Stri Bodh." Edited the "Rast Gofar." Filed a suit against nine prominent Bhattias, known as the Bhattia Conspiracy Case. On 17th December, he won this suit. On 14th May of this year, Jadunathji Brijratanji of Surat filed a Libel Suit against Karsondas for his article named above, and claimed damages of Rs. 50,000. The "Satya Prakash" was amalga-

- mated with the "Rast Goftar." Published an English magazine about Maharajas, and a Gujarati magazine called "Reform and Maharajas". Published a book called "Hinduno Asal Dharam Kem Choothayo" or "How the Ancient Religion of Hindus Degenerated" written by some other person.
- 1862 Published both in Gujarati and in English, reports of the Maharaja Libel Case. Published the Gujarati and English Dictionary and dedicated it to his friend Sheth Karsondas Madhavdas. Edited the "Rast Goftar." On 25th January, 1862, The Maharaja Libel Case against Karsondas and Banina commenced; was heard for twenty four days before the Full Court, and on 22nd April, on the main plea of Justification, it was decided in favour of Karsondas. Dr. John Wilson entertained Karsondas for the bold stand he took in the cause of Truth and Purity in the Maharaja Libel Case.
- 1863 On 13th March, left Bombay for England. Before his departure the "Buddhi Vardhak Sabha," some Khoja gentlemen and ten Editors of Vernacular papers and periodicals presented to Karsondas, public farewell Addresses. The Khoja Address was accompanied by a purse of Rs. 1,000. At another meeting of friends and admirers, a purse of Rs. 8,000 was presented to Karsondas for the benefit of his family. At the end of September, owing to poor health Karsondas had to return back to India. For two months in this year edited the "Stri Bodh."
- 1864 Karsondas suffered much in the share speculation mania, but was saved through the intervention of his Parsi and European friends. Published in Gujarati an introduction to his "Travels in England."
- 1865 Translated Sir Bartle Frere's speech on "Female Education" in Gujarati, and had it published in a pamphlet form. Published an enlarged second edition of his book on "Niti Vachan" without any dedication. Published his monumental work on "The Sect of Maharajas," in English.
- 1866 Published his another monumental work in Gujarati called "Travels in England". Commenced to write a big work on Vedio Dharma and religious books after the Vedas, but could not complete it, and hence published, as much as was written, in a book form. Toured in

- Kathiawar, and stayed for a month in Rajkote to prepare himself for the political mission to England in connection with the chronic dispute between the Shravaks and the Palitana Durbar. Received Rs 6,000 as a donation from Government for publishing his work on his Travels.
- 1867 In March, went to England a second time, but returned before winter to India. Published his book called "Kutumb Mitra". Published second edition of "Travels to England." In December, 1867, under the Political Agent of Kathiawar, the State of Rajkote was placed under Karsondas's charge as Assistant Superintendent. On 18th November 1867, was appointed a Member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
- 1868 Published the second edition of "Sansar Sukh", and the second edition of "Gujarati into English Dictionary." Started the "Vignan Vilas" periodical. Continued the administration of the Rajkote State. On 29th December 1868, was nominated as a Fellow of the University of Bombay.
- 1869 Got a Sanskrit Drama called "Pakhand Dharma Khandan Natak", translated in Gujarati and had it published with his own Preface. Continued the administration of Rajkote.
- 1870 Continued the administration of Rajkote till March. In April, was appointed as Special Assistant in charge Limree, on a monthly salary of Rs. 500. Published the first part of his book called "Nibandu Mala." Received Addresses from the Rajkote Durbar Lady, from the people of Rajkote and also from the educated people of Rajkote. Effected a reform in the Baniya Mahajan of Rajkote, whereby the Mahajan passed a resolution to allow Baniyas to travel to foreign countries without any caste interference.
- 1871 On 2nd May, brought about the first Kapole Baniya widow-remarriage. Continued the administration of Limree. Died 28th August at Limree at 9 A. M.

# Karsondas Mulji.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

—: o :—

Beautiful lives are those that bless :  
Silent rivers of happiness,  
Whose hidden fountains few may guess.

\* \* \* \*

He liveth long who liveth well,  
All else is life but flung away ;  
He liveth longest who can tell  
Of true things truly done each day.

H. BONAR. •

Samuel Smiles says: "Life is a book which lasts one's life-time, but it requires wisdom to understand its difficult pages." I have, in this sketch, feebly attempted to study the pages of the life of Karsondas Mulji. Karsondas was born in 1832; one hundred and one years have passed, and it is possible to see through the storms in which he became merged, the outlines of his striking and splendid personality; but in order to appreciate thoroughly the life and work of that great and good man, it is essential that every body should know first his surroundings, and understand the scope of the drama in which he played so prominent a part, and further, one should know the people he had to deal with.

#### THE BACK-GROUND OF THE TIMES.

The advent of the British Government was welcomed as a boon by the Indians. When India passed into the hands of the British Government, it was a hot-bed of

anarchy which jeopardized people's life and property, disintegrated industries, impeded trade and commerce, suspended social amenities, encouraged the tyranny of one caste over another, and interfered with freedom of conscience. Laying down the maxim that "it would be treason against British sentiment to imagine that it ever could be the principle of this Government to perpetuate ignorance in order to secure paltry and dishonest advantages over the blindness of the multitude," the Government established schools and colleges. In 1828 Lord William Cavendish Bentinck became Governor-General. He ruled India with eminent prudence, integrity and benevolence; and during his term of office, he was able to devote himself almost exclusively to the business of internal administration and reform. His constant study was to elevate the intellectual and moral character of the people committed to his charge. His administration marked an era of peaceful improvement and progress in India. It commenced in July 1828 and lasted until March 1835. Before his time, Indians were practically excluded from all official employment except of the most menial kind. This was both unjust and expensive. Lord Bentinck threw open to Indian candidates responsible employment in the political and executive service. His administration, though not remarkable for any great military exploits, was distinguished by a large number of reforms, economical, judicial and social, of far greater value and importance than any conquest. The most famous reform associated with his name was the prohibition of Sati. This horrible custom (the self-immolation of widows on the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands) had long been practised in India, though many scholars believed that it was not authorized

by the Hindu Shastras. Dwarkanath Tagore and Raja Ram Mohan Roy were distinctly of opinion that the custom of Sati had nothing to do with religion. An Act (Regulation XVIII of 1829) was passed by the Governor-General in Council "for declaring the practice of Sati or of burning or burying alive the widows of Hindus, illegal and punishable by the criminal courts." Another social reform effected by him was the suppression of Thugee. The practice of Thugee consisted in the strangling of innocent persons for the sake of plunder by strong armed gangs who infested the highways of every province in India except the Konkan, and inveigled unwary travellers to their death. The persons who practised this profession, were known as Thugs. They regarded their profession, not only as a work of getting money, but also as a part of their religion. More than three thousand of the Thugs were arrested, and an elaborate system of detection and punishment was organized, under the control of Major Sleeman, which extirpated the system almost completely. Further, by the Charter Act of 1833, the Governor-General in Council was required to pass laws and regulations for protection of the people "from insult and outrage in their persons, religions and opinions." By the same Act, it was declared that no man was to be held disqualified for any office by reason of his religion. Under this Act, British rulers recognised legal equality of all. This was a great blessing to Indians. It meant that there were no privileged classes of individuals, that all enjoyed equal and impartial protection of the law. Under the British regime. political unrest had completely stopped and fear of dacoits (men in batches committing robbery or theft with violence) and thieves was gone. Invasions of foreigners and revolts and rebellions of Indians

anarchy which jeopardized people's life and property, disintegrated industries, impeded trade and commerce, suspended social amenities, encouraged the tyranny of one caste over another, and interfered with freedom of conscience. Laying down the maxim that "it would be treason against British sentiment to imagine that it ever could be the principle of this Government to perpetuate ignorance in order to secure paltry and dishonest advantages over the blindness of the multitude," the Government established schools and colleges. In 1828, Lord William Cavendish Bentinck became Governor-General. He ruled India with eminent prudence, integrity and benevolence; and during his term of office, he was able to devote himself almost exclusively to the business of internal administration and reform. His constant study was to elevate the intellectual and moral character of the people committed to his charge. His administration marked an era of peaceful improvement and progress in India. It commenced in July 1828 and lasted until March 1835. Before his time, Indians were practically excluded from all official employment except of the most menial kind. This was both unjust and expensive. Lord Bentinck threw open to Indian candidates responsible employment in the political and executive service. His administration, though not remarkable for any great military exploits, was distinguished by a large number of reforms, economical, judicial and social, of far greater value and importance than any conquest. The most famous reform associated with his name was the prohibition of Sati. This horrible custom (the self-immolation of widows on the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands) had long been practised in India, though many scholars believed that it was not authorized



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were ended. Security of life and property was established. People commenced to pursue their avocations with the assurance of reaping the fruits of their labours. Seemingly, wealth had commenced to increase. Thus under the British Government, not only violent and dangerous crimes were suppressed by suitable measures for their detection and punishment, but order and peace, the first conditions for progress of every form and kind, were established throughout the country.

Let us now see what the condition of the society was in those times.

#### IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION.

The Hindus, as a whole, were a hopelessly priest-ridden people and besides, were highly superstitious. The impact of Western civilisation made their intellect alert but they lacked the essential courage of their convictions. Blind obedience, flattery and servility were distinctly noticed in their character. People lacked the spirit of adventure; they were afraid of suffering, in the event of their leading an adventurous life. They had no spirit of independence. Rich people were ignorant as to how to make a proper use of their wealth. They lived not decently. They purchased honours and passed a dishonest and luxuriant life. The most important rules of continence or 'Brahmacharya' were forgotten by the people. People spent their wealth indiscriminately. Their ideas of philanthropy were queer: these consisted in feeding Sadhus, ignorant Brahmins, and able-bodied beggars. None had a broad out-look on life. Nobody looked at the welfare of others besides his own caste people. People did not cherish any ideals for the welfare of their country. The civic conscience of the people was inert. In their study,

politics formed no part. The life that men lived, at that period, was purely devoted to their hearths and homes. People knew not the virtue of enlightened patriotism. In short, as described by a Gujerati poet, people of that period were not men. The Hindu Rajas of the period lived lifeless lives of dependence. They owned slaves: and in their turn, they were themselves slaves, acting slavishly in obedience to the wishes of the Political Residents in their States.

Among the Hindus, the Brahmins had ceased to study the Vedas and the Upanishads. They either served, begged or acted in the capacity of cooks. Very few took to banking or agricultural pursuits. As new Hindu sects were being founded and the study of the original sources of Hindu religion was neglected, the Brahmins, remaining idle, lost their learning and spiritual qualities. Still among them, the Nagar Brahmins, being bold and industrious, took an active part in State affairs, and hence were leading rich and happy lives. So far as the Gujeratis in general were concerned, they were, owing to their subjection to outsiders for generations and also owing to wrong religious teachings, credulous, stuffless, ignorant, timid and effeminate. The merchants among them spoke falsehoods and played all sorts of tricks. They were not brave like Parsis. They took no interest at all in politics. They considered it degrading to serve as teachers. Bhattias and Lohanas, among the Gujeratis, were more brave than others, and hence they visited for trade purposes distant lands. Besides among them the Jain Baniyas, being enthusiastic, industrious and adventurous were better off than others. The Gujerati residents near seaports followed the profession of mariners. The Gujeratis as a whole were pecuniarily better off than

other people, but in point of general culture were backward as compared with their advanced Parsi and Deccanee brothers. The Parsis were industrious and adventurous and were better cultured than other communities. Their relations with their sister communities were quite cordial. The Mahomedans either served, traded or acted as menials.

### THE STATE OF EDUCATION.

The period was the dawn of education in India, and even in a city like Bombay, one can safely say that there was merely a commencement of learning. New learning was introduced. English schools were established and pupils willingly went there to learn. The knowledge of the English language brought before the people proper information of the whole world. The eyes of the people got new lustre at seeing new knowledge. People commenced to look at their life in the light of new knowledge. Much of it was found to be unsuitable. Much of what was new, they desired to introduce. Thus a tug of war ensued between the old and the new. Teachers teaching astronomy were considered irreligious because truths of that science did not tally with the Puranic fables. Learning English was considered by old orthodox people, to make students atheists. So far as women's education was concerned, it was nil. Women themselves were against the education of their sex. Women receiving education were superstitiously believed to become unfortunate persons in life. Hence, no female teachers were available for girls' schools. Government had published some useful school books, but on the whole, Gujerati books were quite rare, except a few story books. The Gujerati language was not considered worth

studying, with the result that very few knew how to read or write it correctly. In the old fashioned schools, knowledge of the Gujerati language sufficient to make pupils write letters was given. Gujerati poetry was not given any place in the curriculum. Only Vraj, Sanskrit and Persian languages were studied. The teacher's profession was held in low estimation. People had no taste for reading newspapers. The taste for reading was hardly cultivated. Newspapers were hardly well-written. Their editors were not educated people. They edited papers for the purpose of earning money by blackmailing. There were no cheap public libraries. Throughout, one noticed superstition, inertia, narrow views and indifference and apathy towards education.

Poet Narmadashanker's general view about the benefits of British Rule :

"People of different classes assumed a hopeful attitude, and then tried to improve the position of their country. People no longer felt contented. Superstition, timidity, blind devotion, ignorance, flattery, sole reliance on luck, the feeling of being contented with their position, servility, all these undesirable qualities were on the wane. People were gradually imbibing the virtues of divine discontent, hope, bravery, industry, concentration, independence, love of learning and self-respect. Everybody's desire to acquire learning was clearly in evidence. All carried on their choice professions. Everybody was anxious to make a name for himself."

#### THE BENEFITS OF PEACE

The greatest advantage which English rule had brought to India was peace. All had opened to them a world of new ideas. Ideas of comfort had arisen and standards

of living had improved. The sense of legal and political rights had been created. A sense of individuality had been developed. With it had come a spirit of questioning and criticism in every department of life and thought. It is unquestionable that as a matter of fact, the horizon of the people's thought and the spheres of their activity had been considerably enlarged under British rule. The literature, the philosophy and the science of the West had stimulated the mind and roused the intellectual energy and aspirations of the people in many directions. Moral and social ideas of a new order, the result of contact with Western life and thought, had shaped themselves before many minds which were fired with the ambition of purifying and regenerating social life.

The British Government established peace, but in social life the contact of the English people, their learning and their civilisation, created deep discontent. So far as the educated people were concerned, they lost faith in old ideas. So far as the orthodox people were concerned, their attitude towards the civilisation of the foreigners remained hostile. Everywhere there was chaos in the mental state of the people.

#### THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

The social condition of the people was in its lowest state. Ignorance and superstition of the people accounted for this state. Women's position and status were worse than those of slaves. Their position was most degraded, and was compared to the position of a shoe. Treatment given to them was inhuman. They were not considered fit to listen to the chanting of the Vedas. Men married to have servants in their houses just as people kept in their possession cows and buffaloes. Women passed most of

their time in household work. They were illiterate and had recourse to all sorts of superstitious practices to get male children. For this purpose, they went to distant places of pilgrimage to consult crafty priests and other charlatans. The birth of girls in families was considered to be the result of past sins. Girls were married at a very early age. There was enforced widowhood. Widow re-marriage was practised only among such castes as the Bhansalis, Bhavsars, Kolis, Kanbis, Lohars and Sutars. Among the people of other castes, doing so was considered to be a highly sinful act. Women put on thin clothes, wore bodices which exposed their bodies. They put on heavy ornaments themselves and decorated their children similarly. They dared not put on slippers or shoes. Even during the hottest part of the day, or on any day in the monsoon, women dared not use umbrellas. They sang filthy songs on marriage festivals. They cherished false notions of modesty and concealed their faces from their relatives and strangers. People spent very large sums, at the times of marriages and deaths, so much so, that they incurred heavy debts on such occasions. Old men paid large sums to secure young girls as wives. Consulting of horoscopes through astrologers, fear of the evil eye, belief in evil spirits, witchcraft, consulting of omens, and several other unmeaning customs were found prevalent among the people. The Holi Festival was celebrated in the most mischievous manner by men singing most indecent songs and having recourse to most mischievous practices. The caste system had degenerated to such an extent that instead of there being only four original castes, there were innumerable exclusive castes. People followed hereditary professions. People of high castes considered

it degrading to follow the professions generally pursued by the so-called lower castes. In some castes, there was the custom of contracting marriages with aristocratic or 'kulin' families by paying heavy amounts to the bridegrooms in such families. Foreign travel was considered to be irreligious on the ground that people lost their religion by becoming polluted when they visited foreign countries. People dared not give up any of these ancient but stupid customs because they were extremely afraid of being excommunicated from their caste, and this penalty inflicted by castes was rightly considered by the people as more hard than transportation to the Andamans.

#### THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL STATE OF THE PEOPLE.

People were entirely ignorant about wherein true religion consisted, who founded their religion, and with what object it was founded. They were blissfully ignorant of what was written in their religious books. They considered their religion to consist in observing outward formalities such as the putting on of certain religious marks, visiting of temples, going to pilgrimages and the observance of rules of interdining and intermarriage. These formalities they slavishly followed. They called themselves Hindus, but they did not know at all what were their ancient Scriptures, and whether what they did was sanctioned by their Scriptures or not. If a Hindu were to take water or dine with a person of any other community, he would be considered to have been polluted and to have lost his religion; but the same Hindu who observed the outward formalities, but committed theft, prejury, adultery or murder, would not be considered to have



ceased to be a Hindu! Among the people, there being no learned and righteous spiritual preceptors, people followed the faith in which they were born, because it was their ancestral religion. No one, even if anxious to follow the dictates of his conscience, would dare to do so because of his fear of being excommunicated and his finding it very hard to contract marriages of his children outside his caste. In Gujerat, the priests themselves were ignorant and vicious and were worshipped as gods only because they were their fathers' sons. These priests had recourse to all sorts of tricks to amass wealth from their too credulous votaries. In Bombay, the Gosai Maharajas, or the spiritual guides of the Vaishnavas of the sect of Vallabbacharya, had an unlimited sway over their votaries, specially among the Bhattia and the Bania communities. They loved their votaries to be submissive; they did not like them to doubt and to reason. They loved the credulous votaries, and they in their turn rendered their unquestioning obedience to them. They considered the Maharajas as gods to such an extent, that most respectable families considered themselves honoured by the Maharajas cohabiting with their wives and daughters. Almost all votaries believed that unless their wives were enjoyed by their priests they would become barren. In some cases, in the case of the sickness of husbands or children, in order to procure their speedy recovery, women even vowed to dedicate their daughters to the embraces of their priests. Even some of the votaries who had received education were not free from rendering this servile obedience to their priests. A writer summarising the religious superstitions of the times said: "The Hinduism of to-day is not the Hinduism of your forefathers three thousand years ago; an avaricious and licentious priesthood has

engrafted on a simple system doctrines of which we find no trace in the beautiful and spirit-illuminating texts of the Vedas, and which by the immorality they inculcate and the bondage of degradation in which they yoke the people, are precisely the very reverse of what the great teachers of a nation of Rishis as Max Muller calls the Hindus, taught in the golden age of the creation." Several educated people led a double life of intellectual slavery and emancipation. This was because people believed religious matters to be outside the sphere of reason. Among the Gujeratis, there were hardly a few people who could boast of their religious knowledge.

So far as the moral condition of the people was concerned, people talked about morals but true morality was not in evidence. People spoke truth only in business with a view not to lose their commercial credit; but otherwise fraud and falsehood very largely prevailed among people. Early marriages and enforced widowhood and poverty gave rise to immoral practices. Flattery, roguery and servility were the order of the day among people aspiring to earn positions of honour. Rich people amassed their wealth fraudulently and then earned fame by donating large sums in charity. Rich people in the Baniya community talked loud of their views on reform, but in practice, were the greatest opponents of progress.

The world was born before the coming of the light. In the beginning, it lay in impenetrable gloom; but out of that dense darkness, that impenetrable night, was born the world with all its beauty and splendour. In moral things, we see the same truth. The birth of Christ was at the darkest period of the world's history. Socially, politically, morally and religiously, the world lay in the

arms of darkness. So generally speaking, has it been with the great events inaugurated by men. Generally they have had their birth in darkness. If the history of the human race and the history of the world teach us anything, it is that great events have generally their beginnings in darkness. Hence a writer says beautifully: "Indeed, as we look back upon the past, we see that all down the ages, darkness has nurtured the angels of healing and comfort and benediction. Out of the nights of pain and sorrow and temptation and loss have come forth the heralds of hope and strength and victory."

#### THE FLOWER OF THE BEST IN THE PERIOD.

Further, reforms, institutions, eras, and even constitutions, can only be interpreted through the men who lived in them and in whom they lived. In many of the men from whom great movements and ideas spring, there is a certain quality easily recognisable to a practised eye, but hard to define satisfactorily. Such "men of the spirit" are sensitive to the directions in which progress and destiny lie, as artists are sensitive to beauty. To men of this kind life owes its most living part—the spiritual substance on which we draw for all motive, inspiration and guidance in ordinary life. Through them come these ideas which are forces in shaping character and society. Such men are the great men, and in the words of Robert Ingersoll they "are the heroes who have freed the bodies of men; they are the philosophers and thinkers who have given liberty to the soul; they are the poets who have transfigured the common and filled the lives of many millions with love and song, they are the artists who have covered the bare walls of weary life with the triumphs of genius; they are the heroes who

have slain the monsters of ignorance and fear, who have outraged the Gorgon and driven the cruel gods from their thrones; they are the inventors, the discoverers, the great mechanics, the kings of the useful, who have civilised this world." Karsondas was not an accident. His pioneer reforms, the beneficial changes he accomplished in the mentality of his people, were the product of adequate causes and were accomplished in a period of two decades. He sprung up from an ancestry competent to produce him. He was the final flower and ultimate outcome of converging hereditary forces, that culminated at last in the full production of his splendid and exceptional personality. He concentrated, intensified, brought to clear consciousness, and realised more fully, feelings and ideas which were active all around him. He was sensitive to the directions in which progress and destiny lay. He had a fuller and more spacious consciousness of his community's and country's life than other men, in virtue of which he half anticipated, half created, some steps forward for which a whole community had been waiting. He was a leader of men. His inspired personality was one in which some hidden force, idea of impulse, became, as it were, an incandescent flame affording light to others. The first fruit of the meeting of the East and the West in the Baniya community of Bombay was the birth of Karsondas amidst the encircling darkness of the social, moral and religious life led by his people.

#### A PRACTICAL IDEALIST.

Karsondas was an eminent social servant. His social service—using the term in its simplest meaning—comprised every contribution, that he as a member of his society, individually or working through a group,

brought to society. The kernel of his social service consisted in his determination to make practical experiment as well as to theorize, to do as well as to think as a cultured member of his society. He felt the claims of his society upon him more than others, and hence he brought to all his work, that conception of his duty, as a member of a civilised society, to make his contribution to the well-being of his fellows. Every social servant is almost certain to be also an agitator. Such a social agitator has a most important part to play in social progress. As such the aim of Karsondas was generally to awaken the public social conscience and to strike at the root of all customs which injuriously affected the physical, intellectual or moral constitution of the community. The social conscience of the Hindus had to be awakened. They had to be made to know their own social condition and to ascertain its diseases and to realise the gravity of those diseases. The social reform movement of his times was the result of the mental enlargement, which was brought on by the contact of Indians with Western thought and Western learning. The imbibing of Western ideas led them to examine their social plant and to discern the conditions that were unfavourable to its symmetry, its healthy growth and its perfect development. Karsondas's position was a very delicate one, because a Hindu knows not the true distinction between what is social and what is religious. Hindus, therefore, were truly said to "live in religion, to move in religion, to act in religion, and drink in religion." To a Hindu, all social matters had some religious significance, either direct or indirect. The religious spirit pervaded the whole Hindu social organisation, and was to be found in every part of it. It was the very atmosphere in which

the organisation lived, moved and had its being. Karsondas was therefore obliged to adopt the process of adaptation, so as to preserve all the good features of the glorious past of India, and at the same time, assimilate what was best in the Western civilisation.

Karsondas became an agitator through his pen. He was a literary agitator whose duty was to arouse interest among the large number of people who were ignorant, credulous and superstitious, by his writings in papers and periodicals. Press and Pen and Tongue were his instruments and through them, he lured his people to take an interest in social, moral and religious matters almost unconsciously. His efforts to strengthen Hindu public opinion were not weak, irregular, spasmodic and unsystematic. He by his vigorous, consistent, regular and systematic agitation, both by tongue and pen, brought about a rapid change in the sentiments of his large community.

Karsondas's selfless social service brought him testimonials from eminent persons of all communities. I give below a few of these. —

Sir Bartle Frere, the late Governor of Bombay, said :  
 " But though firm as a rock when his principles were at stake, I never met a man of more modest or unassuming demeanour, with less self-seeking and more of the spirit of the true martyr. I know of no more hopeful sign for the future of the races of Hindustan than the existence among them of men like Karsondas Mulji. "

Dr. J. Murrey Mitchell, M. A., LL. D., said :—" In Karsondas India has lost a single-minded, energetic reformer whom she could very ill spare ".

Mr. K. N. Kabraji said :—" Karsondas Mulji was neither a reformer in name nor a lip-reformer, but a real man, a second Ram Mohan Roy. "

It is of such a personality that I wish to give here a short biographical sketch.

#### CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION.

Mr. Karsondas was born on July 25, 1832, at Bombay. His father Mr. Mulji and his mother belonged to the Kapole Baniya caste. They observed the religious tenets of the Vallabhacharya Sect. During his childhood Karsondas lost his maternal grandfather and grandmother. He had also the misfortune of losing his mother when he was only seven years of age. Karsondas's mother was a member of the well-known family of Nagardas Hirji Mody. Karsondas's ancestors were the first pioneer Baniya merchants who came from Kathiawar and settled in Bombay, and were therefore recognised as persons of established reputation by the subsequent comers. Karsondas, during his mother's lifetime, was living now and then with his maternal aunt. When Mr. Mulji married a second time, Karsondas left for ever his father's shelter and lived with his mother's aunt. This lady was good, intelligent and clever. She acted as Karsondas's guardian and as such gave all facilities to him to prosecute his studies. Karsondas commenced his education at the age of six years in a Gujerati school and studied there for full five years. He studied for nine months in the Government Gujerati School, during the year 1847. He then joined an English school and studied there for three years and four months. In the vernacular schools, he had acquired a knowledge of the Vraj language. He had not the good fortune of learning Sanskrit. At the age of twenty-one, Karsondas was

studying in the Elphinstone Institution. As a student he was industrious and painstaking and his conduct was diligent, obedient and 'uniformly correct'. In the schools and college, Karsondas was considered to be a promising student.

The year 1848 was an unfortunate year for Karsondas. In this year, his wife and his mother's sister died, and his guardian aunt became a widow.

Very little is known about Karsondas's life for the first twenty years. His whole public life was concentrated in seventeen years, from his twenty-first to his thirty-eighth year. During these years he did most useful work some of which was very notable and of pioneer kind, so much so that among the Gujerati population, his name had become a household word.

#### LOSS OF THE ONLY SHELTER.

In Bombay, a few enthusiastic and enlightened Parsi gentlemen, founded a new institution, for the benefit of Indians, known as the "Dnyan Prasarak Mandli" or Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge. At first, this Mandli acted as a Branch of the Students' Society. At one of the meetings of this Mandli, the subject selected for debate was Re-Marriage of Hindu Widows. Mr. Edalji Prussia, a member of the Mandli, after hearing the debate, decided to offer a prize of rupees one hundred and fifty for the best essay on the subject. Karsondas, at the young age of twenty-one, aspired to compete for the prize and commenced in right earnest the study of the subject and actually wrote out a portion of the essay, and kept the same concealed in his drawer so that his orthodox aunt, who had recently become a widow, may not come to know of his attempt. He was obliged to take this precaution



because in the orthodox society of his time, the action of a widow re-marrying was considered to be highly sinful. A servant of the house, out of sheer mischief, removed from the drawer the few written pages of the essay, and handed over the same to Karsondas's aunt. The very fact of her ward writing on the subject made her very angry, and she decided at once to mete out to Karsondas the highest punishment which it was in her power to inflict. She at once asked Karsondas to leave her house. Karsondas, without any hesitation, immediately left his aunt's shelter.

This first step of his life showed his independent nature and gave out a glimpse of the future life of freedom that he was to lead. He did not go to stay with his father because he did not expect any better treatment there. The seeds of his future noble life as a reformer were sown by this small but significant and decisive action on his part. This bold decision on his part to stand on his legs was indeed the first turning point in his memorable life. Karsondas's father lent no help to this rebel of a son. Karsondas was young, moneyless and shelterless; yet he was not dismayed. For food, he had to go to hotels, and in a number of ways, he had to undergo hardships but all these he manfully endured. God had given him birth for a special mission and he was undergoing a severe purification in the fiery furnace. His spirit remained undaunted and prosecuting his studies with more intense fervour he succeeded in getting scholarships. This enabled him to tide over the period of of trial temporarily. For some time more, he was able to continue his studies at the Elphinstone Institution, but for want of adequate monetary help, and owing to domestic difficulties, ultimately, he was obliged to leave the College.

## BEGINNING OF PUBLIC CAREER.

Thus, though he was a promising young man, hard and relentless circumstances compelled Karsondas to put an untimely end to his desire to learn further, though he intensely longed to acquire more knowledge. Providence then came to his rescue. He was appointed as headmaster of the Gokuldas Tejpal Seminary at Mandvi Bunder in Bombay, on a monthly salary of Rupees thirty seven. This God-sent help put vigour in his heart. The parched soul, getting the needed nourishment, was refreshed, and it boldly decided to carve out a career for itself. Karsondas joined the newly-started "Buddhi-Vardhak Hindu Sabha" (The Society for the Advancement of Mental Culture among Hindus). This institution was founded, in the year 1851, by a band of Gujerati Hindu reformers, expressly for the benefit of Gujerati and Cutchi Hindus. The means of decent livelihood being thus secured, the budding reformer found leisure to study the subject of the advantages of foreign travel. Karsondas wrote a paper on the subject, and although the subject of foreign travel was tabooed by the orthodox Hindus as being against Hindu Shastras, he boldly dared to read, for the first time, in an open meeting of the Sabha, his paper, in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering of members and sympathisers of the Sabha, in the year 1853. His paper was listened to with rapt attention by the audience and created such a deep impression on the people assembled, that in the minds of some, a deep longing sprung up to go to foreign countries. With the help of a few sympathetic friends, the Sabha got Karsondas's paper printed with a specially composed note by its Honorary Secretary, wholly supporting the view-point of the writer. This step of the Sabha

was the first public encouragement that Karsondas received at the hands of his fellow-countrymen. Karsondas henceforward came to be recognised as a prominent member of the Sabha and was hailed in the circle of enlightened men as a prominent reformer. From being an ordinary member of the Sabha, he was elected to the high position of a member of its Managing Committee, and as such, for four continuous years he discharged his duties diligently and conscientiously. Off and on, he delivered lectures on educational and moral topics wherein he deprecated harmful and superstitious customs so largely prevalent in the orthodox Hindu community. For two years Karsondas served as a Secretary of the Sabha; and occasionally, he presided at the Sabha's public meetings. He voluntarily superintended the Boys' and Girls' schools of the Sabha. He was also appointed as an honorary examiner of these schools. It thus appears that from the very beginning of his public career, he recognised his life as a trust and wished to utilize his learning for the good of his countrymen. A true patriot is one who has before his eyes a high ideal for his country; who wishes it to be the best, the most civilised and the most prosperous, its people educated, far-seeing, and humane; who does not shut his eyes to his country's faults and to the mistakes of its Government, but who strives to help as he would help a friend to remedy his faults—to show the people how things might be better and how to set about improving them. Karsondas's whole public and private life is an exemplary instance of this noble idea of what a patriot ought to be.

#### **AWAY WITH UNMEANING CEREMONIES!**

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#### AWAY WITH UNMEANING CEREMONIES!

At the age of sixteen, Karsondas was married to one Valibal. By this wife, he had one daughter and

one son, both of whom predeceased her. In 1852, she died when Karsondas was only 20 years old. In 1857 Karsondas married a second time; but he had the misfortune of losing this second wife within six months of his marriage. At the end of the year, he married a third time. This time, against the wishes of his father-in-law, he discarded the foolish custom of riding a horse while going to the bride's house in the marriage procession, spent very little on feasts, and gave up all useless and unmeaning ceremonies. He was threatened that if he did not act in the customary way, the marriage ceremony would not be performed. Karsondas was threatened in various ways, and that too, till a few hours before marriage; but he remained adamant. The result of this firm attitude was that the bride's party was dissatisfied; they murmured, complained, nay, even abused, but all the same complied in every way with Karsondas's wishes and the bridegroom was duly married. This little instance of Karsondas's firm determination showed that once he made up his mind after due deliberation, it was extremely difficult to make him change even by a hair's breadth. By his third wife, Karsondas had four sons, all of whom survived their father. He had also through her a posthumous daughter. At the time of Karsondas's death, his eldest son was only seven years old.

#### EMPLOYMENT AT DEESA.

Karsondas's thorough and sincere work as a teacher, at the Gokuldas School, produced great influence on the other subordinate teachers in the school, and thereby inspired them with zeal and vigour. It satisfied his superiors also. With this conscientious work, Mr. T. C. Hope, the Head of the Gujarat Education Department,

was so well pleased, that he rewarded Karsondas by appointing him as Head Master of the Government English School at Deesa, in the beginning of the year 1857, on a monthly salary of Rs. 80. On December 27th, 1856, the Buddhivardhak Sabha, of which he was a distinguished member, presented him with a Farewell Address. Another public meeting of Gujarati gentlemen, first of its kind in Bombay, was convened in honour of Karsondas. At this meeting, Mr. Gungadas Kishoredas presided and suitable speeches were made by different persons, in appreciation of the good services of Karsondas.

In this year, with a view to enlighten his ignorant countrymen who were the blind followers of their spiritual guides (the Maharajas) in whose hands lay the spiritual welfare of their votaries, Karsondas, in his Satya Prakash, offered through an advertisement, a prize to the writer of the best essay on the subject of "What should be the ideal relation between Gurus (spiritual guides) and their male and female disciples".

Karsondas took charge of his post at Deesa, but there he did not keep good health. He was advised by his European medical adviser to take animal food but, he, having the courage of his convictions, declined to comply with his wishes. Karsondas requested the officer to grant him a leave certificate, but that was declined, and Karsondas had no other alternative but to leave his service. During his short stay of ten months at Deesa, he founded a Society for the welfare of its inhabitants and edited a vernacular monthly called "Niti Bodhak" or Moral Adviser.

## THE 'SATYAPRAKASH'.

After his return to Bombay, his well-established reputation, as an earnest and conscientious teacher, enabled him to get the appointment of an Assistant Master in the Fort Branch School of the Elphinstone Institution. Karsondas commenced his career as a journalist, by writing useful articles on social and religious reforms, in the weekly paper 'Rast Goftar' or Truth-Speaker, a paper which catered mainly for its Parsi clientele. He was also a contributor of articles pertaining to the welfare of women, to a magazine called "Stri-Bodh" or Advice to Women. He sent articles for the periodicals called "Buddhi Vardhak" or Promoter of Intelligence and "Dnyan Prasarak" or Spreader of Knowledge. He wrote two books called "Niti Vachan" or Words of Morality and "Sansar Sukh" or Social Happiness. This kind of desultory writing did not satisfy the aspiring writer. He had a great mind to write much on great and urgent social and religious problems of the day. His mind was full of ideas and ideals, and he greatly desired the early introduction of many reforms which he thought were highly necessary for the regeneration of the Hindu society. But to do adequate justice to this matter, he saw the utter necessity of starting a special paper of his own wherein he could deal with subjects for the sole welfare of his great community. He ventured to start one, in 1855, with the promised patronage of Mr. Mungaldas Nathoobhoy. Karsondas managed and edited the new paper without taking any remuneration, In consonance with his own character, he gave a beautiful but highly significant title to his paper. He called it "Satya-Prakash" or The Light of Truth. This paper, from its



start, was conducted with such honesty and ability that it came to be recognised among its patrons, as a Paper with a Personality. This new paper was started not with a view to earning a livelihood, but solely and purely with the philanthropic objects of destroying the evil customs prevailing among the members of his community, of dispelling clouds of darkness, folly, and superstition rampant among them and of seeing that they enjoyed happiness both here and hereafter. From the beginning of this paper down till the time it ceased to have its separate existence, Karsondas, as its editor, honestly and zealously served his people through it, to such an extent, as thoroughly to justify the name that was so far-sightedly selected by him. In Bombay, there were very few well-conducted vernacular papers, and besides, their editors were neither educated nor were imbued with proper ideas of good reforms nor were fired with the noble zeal of doing good to the people. The object of these editors was to serve their own selfish purpose of eking out a livelihood by fair or foul means.

#### WAR AGAINST IMMORAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.

The paper was founded at a psychological moment, because in the year 1855, there was a great religious controversy going on between the Vaishnava Maharajas and the Brahmins of Bhuleshwar in Bombay, on the question of "Chhpan Bhog". The festival was so known, because on this day, fifty-six different kinds of choicest dishes were being prepared for being presented as offerings to the presiding Deity. The Bhuleshwar Brahmins, following the practice of the Vaishnava Maharajas, commenced to observe this year, the "Chhpan Bhog" festival, and joyfully partook the sacred food offered to their Deity, Shri

Shiva. Among the Shaivites, eating the offered food to the Deity—Shri Shiva—is religiously considered to be a sin. The Maharajas, ostensibly with the object of putting down as irreligious practice but really with a view to curtail the authority of the Brahmins, and thereby putting a break on the widely-spreading worship of Shiva, asked their Vaishnava followers to cease patronising Brahmins till they repented of their irreligious conduct. Karsondas, from his young age, being well-acquainted with the immorality practised by the Maharajas, found this to be a golden opportunity for exposing them. He was by nature fitted to wield well his pen. The Pen was his great instrument, which he wielded throughout his life with great force, unusual vigour and strict integrity. He started the Satya Prakash, when the controversy was at its fiercest. In this paper, he commenced to expose in chaste language, the degraded cult of the Maharajas and their immoral practices. All sorts of serious efforts by means of supplication, bribes and threats were made to silence the bold and fearless editor, but they proved unavailing. To rebut the charges levelled against the Maharajas, they thought it necessary to have a special organ of their own. They did not start one, but thought fit to bribe Mr. Nowrosji Dorabji, the Editor of a vernacular newspaper called "Chabook" or Whip. In one of the issues of this paper, Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji was personally abused, whereupon Sheth Lakhmidas filed a suit for damages against the Editor, in the year 1859. The Editor was non-plussed; he tried to find out means whereby he may go scot-free. His friends advised him to have recourse to an ingenious method. He was asked to issue summonses for the Maharajas to compel their attendance at the Court, so that the Maharajas being afraid

would settle the suit. The Editor followed this advice, and subpaenaed the Maharajas for appearing in the Court as witnesses. To avoid their personal presence, the Maharajas prepared a document, whereby the signatories bound themselves not to write anything against the Maharajas nor attempt to procure their attendance at the Supreme Court and to excommunicate any one who did contravene the resolutions. The Maharajas further decided to send a petition to Government to have legislation passed so as to get themselves exempted for ever from personally attending Courts. For this they got up a subscription list which contained subscriptions amounting to a total of Rs. 60,000. In order that the votaries of the Maharajas may sign this document, extreme coercive measures were adopted. The Maharajas closed the temples for full one week, so that staunch Vaishnavas, who had taken a vow not to eat any food until they had offered their worship to the deities in the temples, found their position precarious. Women votaries wept, beat their breasts and brought undue influence to bear on the male members of their families. Thus by unfair means, the male votaries were forced to sign the document. The clause in the document about excommunication was specially intended to bring utmost pressure on Karsondas to silence him. This was a trying situation for young Karsondas and presented to him a problem which required speedy decision on his part. On one side, was the path of hardship but one most honourable for a lover of truth, purity and justice, in the sphere of religion, and on the other, was one full of ease and comfort, but one compromising with immorality and that too, in the sacred domain of religion. With a thorough insight, Karsondas decided

to pursue the former path and therein lay his great merit as a man of courage and proper judgment. This was the second turning-point in his eventful life and here again, he showed the noble stuff of which he was made. Karsondas boldly cast the die. In the next issue of the Satya Prakash, he wrote a spirited article correctly designating the above-referred-to document as a "Slavery Bond." In this, he criticised each and every article of the Bond and praised the action of some of the Vaishnava votaries for their independence in declining to sign a clause, if it was inserted in the Bond, whereby the signatories had to agree neither to subscribe nor to read papers in which the Maharajas were attacked. Thus the seeds of a battle royal were sown in the city of Bombay between the reform party of about two hundred souls on the one side, and devout, orthodox Vaishnavas numbering about 50,000 on the other. Karsondas followed this article by distributing handbills broadcast in which the Bond and its terms were thoroughly exposed. This was followed by two advertisements for getting two prize papers, one on the Slavery Bond and the other on the authority of the Maharajas. Thus thorough Satya Prakash, Karsondas succeeded in warding off the mean and cowardly attack that was meant to silence him in his reforming crusade. I give below opinions of two independent papers which show that besides Satya Prakash, others were out to put an end to the vices of the Maharajas through the enlightened public opinion of the day. The Bombay Times, in its issue of 23rd August 1859, wrote among other comments as follows: "The deeds of the Maharajas are evil and so they love the darkness and not the light, and have resolved to resist to the death, the inevitable exposure of the witness box, which is

sure to bring on them the detestation of the majority of the public, and must at last overthrow their influence even with their most benighted and bigoted devotees. It is not our purpose to describe their lives, their inevitable avarice, their greed of power, their insufferable pride, their grinding tyranny, and utter contempt of their people, and their abandoned profligacy; it suffices to tell the readers that they claim to be gods and we leave them to conceive how abhorrent and infamous must be their yoke." Another paper called "Ap-Akhitiar" or Independent wrote a leading article from which I give below only a portion:—The mansion of the Hindu Maharaj is a brothel, his hall is the abode of procuresses (women) fallen (from virtue), without reputation, the aspect of his eyes is that of gay lasciviousness, the members of his body are the tenements of evil passions, every particle of his person is replete with unholiness, uncleanness, impurity, and in short, instead of being as they are held to be incarnations of God, the Maharajas have been found to be incarnations of fiends possessed of the qualities and disposition of demons and of Satan."

Nobody dared to excommunicate Karsondas from his caste for fear of legal action being taken against him. The terms of the Slavery Bond remained inoperative, with the result that the people who had subscribed large sums declined to contribute even a pie. The Editor of "Chabook" was defeated in the suit and had to pay damages, and he therefore came to grief.

In 1859, Karsondas had opened a shop for selling Chinese cloth. This he had done for earning his honest maintenance. This shop was conducted by him for six years; but the work of the shop did not at all come in the

way of his contributing, during his spare time, well-thought-out articles on social and religious subjects for the weekly paper "Rast Goftar" and for the monthly magazine called "Stri-Bodh."

### PRIEST OUTWITS POET.

In the middle of 1860, Jadunathji Maharaj came to Bombay. He was an intelligent Maharaj. At Surat, he and his father, having come in contact with the Brahmin reformer Mehtaji Durgaram Muncharam, had started a Girls' School at Surat and the former was reputed to hold advanced views on social reforms. The reformers of Bombay seized the opportunity of spreading the gospel of female education. They therefore requested Jadunathji to preside at the prize distribution gathering of Sheth Mangaldas Nathoobhoy's Girls' School. The Maharaj consented and the prizes were distributed to the girls in the presence of a large audience. Emboldened by this step, Karsondas's friend, poet Narmadashankar Lalshanker, whose vigorous and manly poems in favour of reforms had greatly influenced Karsondas's mind, took a hasty and indiscreet step of inviting Jadunathji Maharaj to an open religious discussion or "Shastrartha". Jadunathji accepted the challenge. He knew how to outwit his opponents. On the day fixed for the meeting, Narmadashanker accompanied by Karsondas and a few other reformers attended the meeting. The Maharaj cleverly avoided discussion on the subject proper, for which the parties had met together, and asked Narmadashanker a straight question, as to whether in his opinion, Hindu Shastras were revealed or not. Narmadashanker replied that he could not believe all the reputed religious works to be of divine

inspiration, as they incorporated also works on grammar and other miscellaneous subjects which had no religious bearing whatever, and which therefore could not be divinely inspired. Jadunathji succeeded in his trick. He called the reformers as a band of people who had neither any faith in the Shastras nor in their religion and therefore were in reality atheists. The meeting came to an abrupt end.

### ORTHODOX AND REFORM PARTIES COME TO GRIPS.

Karsondas regretted the sad end of this meeting; but his was not the nature of a coward. He continued the discussion on these subjects in Satya Prakash. Jadunathji Maharaj had therefore to reply and hence he too started a special magazine called "Swadharma Vardhak and Sanshaya Chhedak" or "Promoter of our Religion and Destroyer of Doubt." This religious discussion in the press took a distinctly bitter turn. The original object of discussion was clean forgotten and the debate centred round the subject of Primitive Hindu Religion and its new Sects. In the periodical published by the Maharajas, reformers were styled as fools, rogues, atheists, etc. Karsondas representing the party of reformers called the new sects to be fraudulent, their priests to be cheats, and their books to be morally poisonous and thus utterly detrimental to the interests of religious-minded people, and mentioned that the priests of the sects being themselves mostly debauched, their devotees should be the last persons to respect them. A huge paper war began. On September, 16th, 1860 in "Chabook" and on 29th of the same month in his periodical, Jadunathji made a strong attack on reformers. To this Karsondas replied by

writing one of the most vehement articles, now made historic, on 21st October, 1860, in the Satya Prakash. The article was headed; "The Primitive Religion of the Hindus and the Present Heterodox Opinions." It is a very long article, and its careful perusal will at once show the ability of Karsondas as an effective writer. Suffice it for us to say here, that in this article, it was mentioned that the Maharajas who acted in the spirit of Gokulnathji's commentary were licentious in their sexual relations and advised the Maharajas to improve their conduct. He wrote this article not with any malice but solely to get the Maharajas to improve their conduct and to behave virtuously as befitting their high and honoured position as the religious preceptors of their devotees. Karsondas abandoned this controversy on 18th November 1860. Throughout the separate existence of Satya Prakash, it proved in the hands of its able and honest editor, one of the most effective of all forces in destroying superstition and promoting the spread of enlightenment and liberty. Jadunathji served Karsondas with a Notice in April 1861, to retract the charges he had made in his paper against him. Karsondas, in the next issue of his paper said that he saw nothing to alter or retract in what he had written and nothing to apologize for, as required by Jadunathji. The Maharaj was now at his wits' end. Karsondas's attacks against the Maharajas produced one salutary effect viz: henceforward the Vaishnavas virtually determined not to be subject to the Maharajas in matters relating to education.

#### THE MAHARAJA LIBEL CASE.

The Maharajas were crest-fallen. Instead of improving their conduct, as demanded by the intelligent section of their votaries, they thought of shielding their



conduct relying on the numerical strength of the Vaishnavas. No greater mistake could have been made than the one which Jadunathji committed by the selfish and insincere advice he got from his worshippers and admirers. Jadunathji, in pursuance of this advice, filed a Libel Suit on 14th May 1861, against Karsondas as the Editor of Satya Prakash and Nanabhai Rustumji Ranina, as the printer of the paper, in the Supreme Court of Bombay, and claimed damages of Rs. 50,000. Mr. F. S. P. Lely, I. C. S., (Commissioner N. D.), in his speech delivered at a meeting held in celebration of the Karsondas Mulji anniversary on 10th September 1897, called the trial of this case in some respects, "the greatest trial of modern times since the trial of Warren Hastings." Feelings of consternation seized the guilty Maharajas; they were terribly afraid; they had great fears that their immoral practices would be thoroughly exposed. They consulted the Bhattia worshippers. The Bhattia community was the only community in India in which the Maharajas could boast of commanding a unanimous following. The members of this community were, to use the words of Karsondas's able barrister Mr. T. C. Anstey, "the most ignorant and the most inveterate in superstition." Karsondas pleaded several pleas, the chief of them being that of not guilty, that the article was not libellous and that what was stated in the article as libellous was true and hence justifiable. The Maharajas' consultation with their blind followers resulted in the Bhattias' meeting on 6th September 1861. At this meeting, it was resolved that no Bhattia should give evidence against the Maharaja and whosoever acted against that resolution should be called to account according to the rules of the caste.

## ORTHODOXY'S HOOLIGANISM.

As this resolution was illegal, Karsondas as the Editor of the Satya Prakash, charged with conspiracy nine leading Bhattias who took a most prominent part in getting the above resolution passed, in the Fort Police Court, before Mr. W. Crawford, the senior Magistrate, on November 16th, 1861. The Magistrate heard the case, and while the case was being heard, both inside and outside the Court, nearly three thousand Vishnavas assembled to see the result of this important case. On the first day, when Karsondas appeared in the Police Court, the highly enraged Bhattias, who were assembled in large numbers outside the Court, severely assaulted him but fortunately he was saved from the fury of the mob by the timely police assistance. The Magistrate committed the Case to the sessions. In the sessions, the Case lasted for three full days, viz., 12th, 13th, and 14th December, 1861. Two rich Bhattia reformer friends of Karsondas proved to be true and sincere friends of reform. The success achieved by Karsondas in this Conspiracy Case was mainly due to the bold evidence given in the case by Sheth Gokuldas Tejpal and Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji. Mr. Lely is entirely right when he says that "their names deserve to be held in lasting honour." The charge of unlawfully combining to defeat the administration of justice in a Court of Law was proved and the jury returned the verdict of guilty. At the suggestion of the complainant Karsondas, his Counsel Mr. Anstey appealed to the Court not to pass a too severe sentence. The sentence for this crime was rigorous imprisonment, but the presiding Sessions Judge, Sir Joseph Arnould, did not pass that heavy sentence but sentenced Gokuldas Liladhur and Lakhmidas Damji, each to pay a fine of Rs. 1,000.

and the seven other defendants were fined to pay Rs. 500 each. The Court ordered Rs. 1,000 to be given to Mr. Karsondas out of the fine amount. Karsondas had incurred expenses in this Case to the extent of Rs. 10,000.

### KARSONDAS MULJI COMES OUT VICTORIOUS.

The trial of the Libel Case commenced on 26th January, 1862; its hearing went on for full twentyfour days. There were thirty witnesses examined on each side. Karsondas was examined by his counsel Mr. Anstey on 4th and 6th February. He was cross examined by Mr. Bayley, Plaintiff's Counsel, on 7th February and was re-examined by Mr. Anstey on the same day. After one month and eighteen days, the Judges gave their decision in the month of April. It was in favour of Karsondas on the main issue of justification, and he was awarded his costs; it was in favour of the Plaintiff on the first plea of not guilty. The total cost of the suit came to Rs 60,000. Karsondas had to bear costs to the extent of Rs. 13,000. Out of this, Rs. 11,500 were paid as ordered by the Court by Jadunathji and the rest was contributed by his Parsi and Hindu friends. The Judgment of Sir Joseph Arnould thoroughly justified Karsondas. In the words of the Bombay Gazette of 22nd April 1862, this judgment was "one of the most eloquent, impressive and just ever delivered from the Bench of the Supreme Court in Bombay." Every reformer should read it; not only that, but he should at least once go through the whole history of the trial so as to appreciate at its true worth the noble social service which Karsondas had rendered to the cause of truth and morality. Here, it is essential, that I should quote in full the classic concluding portion of Sir Joseph Arnould's judgment. He said:—"This

trial has been spoken of as having involved a great waste of the public time. I cannot quite agree with that opinion. No doubt much time has been spent in hearing this case, but I would fain hope it has not been all time wasted. It seems impossible that this matter should have been discussed thus openly before a population so intelligent as that of the natives of Western India, without producing its results. It has probably taught some to think; it must have led many to inquire. It is not a question of theology that has been before us; it is a question of morality. The principle for which the defendant and his witnesses have been contending is simply this that what is morally wrong cannot be theologically right, that when practices which sap the very foundations of morality, which involve a violation of the eternal and immutable laws of Right, are established in the name and under the sanction of Religion, they ought, for the common welfare of society, and in the interest of Humanity itself, to be publicly denounced and exposed. They have denounced, they have exposed them at a risk and to a cost which we cannot adequately measure. These men have done determined battle against a foul and powerful delusion. They have dared to look Custom and Error boldly in the face, and proclaim before the world of their votaries, that their Evil is not Good, that their Lie is not the Truth. In doing this they have done bravely and well. It may be allowable to express a hope that what they have done will not have been in vain, that the seed they have sown will bear its fruit, that their courage and consistency will be rewarded by a steady increase in the number of those, whom their words and their examples have quickened into thought and animated to resistance, whose homes they have helped to

cleanse from loathsome lewdness, and whose souls they have set free from a debasing bondage."

Sir Bartle Frere, the then Governor of Bombay pronounced the following opinion on the Trial: "The whole history of the Maharaj Trial is one of the greatest interest to any one who takes an interest in the ancient or modern religions of India."

Karsondas's father was living at this time. He was seeing Karsondas now and then at his place. He tried his level best to persuade his son to desist from his activities as a reformer; but Karsondas remained firm in his line of activities. Even Karsondas's success in the Libel Case did not please his father. On the contrary, he thought the result to have brought about the complete loss of the reputation of the family.

#### THE GREAT MAN'S HUMILITY.

On July 14th 1862, Karsondas was honoured by Dr. John Wilson at a distinguished gathering of Europeans and Indians, "in acknowledgement of the noble stand for truth and purity which you have made in the Maharaja case," to use the very words of Dr. Wilson used by him in his letter to Karsondas dated 3rd July, 1862. At this gathering, nearly three hundred elite of the Bombay society met to honour Karsondas. Karsondas was not elated at this success, although his Case and its good result constituted the greatest, the most useful and the most memorable event in his whole life. In this connection, I deem it proper to mention here the light in which he took the happy result of the Case. Karsondas's view was as follows: "God has amply rewarded me for all the anxiety and trouble I had to undergo while that case was going on and this result has more than

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convinced me that those who remain steadfastly true and discharge their public duties conscientiously without succumbing to monetary temptations are always befriended by Him. I do not count the success in that case to be my personal success. It was the victory of Reform and Truth and it has given great courage to public workers to use their pen in an independent spirit. Indeed for this our thanks giving should be to God."

By the result of the Case, from an ordinary teacher and editor, Karsondas at once rose in the people's estimation both in our country and also in foreign countries. On all sides, people began to shower praises on his integrity and his zeal for improving the status of his country. Being truly great, Karsondas had great humility; after the case was over, he commenced his favourite occupation of a writer. He again took up the work of finishing the Gujarati-English Dictionary which he had commenced to prepare in the year 1859.

I quote here a few opinions regarding Karsondas's success. Sir Alexander Grant said: "It was all the more honourable to Mr. Karsondas Mulji and his supporters that they had stood up against this tyranny." Dr. Bhau Daji said: "Mr. Karsondas's example shows how much good it is in the power of a person of comparatively humble circumstances to effect, when guided by pure motives and by well-directed and judicious effort." Dr. Murray Mitchell said:—"In fact, the friends of true progress all the world over would heartily rejoice because of the successful stand that had been made by a portion of the native community in the interests of truth and morality and social order.....Mr. Karsondas Mulji and his friends had stood in the breach, and bravely



battled for the right." Dr. John Wilson said: "In what Mr. Karsondas had done, there were indications of intelligence, judgment, conscience and courage, which were in the highest degree admirable and commendable. Only one opinion, recognising them as of this character, had been expressed by Europeans of all classes in India and by educated natives,"

Karsondas had carried on the discussion in his paper only with a view to improve the Maharajas and not with the malicious intention of striking at the root of Hindu religion. He was dragged to Court and there was no other alternative for him but to defend his conduct. He never at any time cherished the idea of founding a new sect at all, because he knew his own limitations. Karsondas had no knowledge of the Sanskrit language and had not devoted much of his time to the study of religious subjects. Further, although Jadunathji Maharaj's evidence in the Libel Case was pronounced to be false by both the Chief Justice and Sir Joseph Arnould, still Karsondas who had a noble heart never thought of prosecuting the Maharaj for perjury. The year 1862 which was Karsondas's 30th year should be considered a red-letter year by every Indian patriot because in that year, owing to the great efforts of Karsondas and his band of reformers Truth was thoroughly vindicated and Purity was once more accorded the highest position it deserved to have in the domain of religion. This becomes clear as daylight when one remembers the moral degradation of the Sect of the Maharajas beautifully summed up in one sentence by the paper known as the Indian Mirror. It said:—"In no region of the world was man more degraded so low."

Ordinary men when they perform a great deed of their life, feel exhausted and afterwards lead an ordinary humdrum life; but great men, born with a mission, do not feel fatigued when they successfully carry out one adventurous action. On the contrary, they feel more exhilarated and try to do more and more glorious deeds for the benefit of their people. Karsondas was one of such great men. One success braved him to do several more glorious deeds for the good of his people.

### CROSSING THE KALA PANI.

Karsondas was again fortunate in meeting with another golden opportunity of putting into practice his reformed views. This time his views on the subject of foreign travel. Since the very time that he read his paper on the advantages of foreign travel, he had desired to visit England. In 1861, before the Maharaj Libel Case, there was a rumour that Karsondas was accompanying his friend Mahipatram to England; and when the Head of the Government Education Department came to know about this, he was extremely pleased. Karsondas was not able to go to England at that time, but the rumour makes us believe that he might have desired to do so. After the great victory of Karsondas, his old friend and colleague of the Buddhivardhak Sabha, Mr. Karsondas Madhavdas offered to Karsondas the following tempting terms to induce him to go to England. The terms were as follows:—(a) to pay him a two-anna share in the firm, if it made profits, but if it made any loss, Karsondas was not to share in it at all; (b) to lend to Karsondas a sum upto Rs. 50,000 for extending the business of his Chinese

cloth shop; (c) to lend upto Rs. one lakh on the credit of goods for doing business in England; (d) to pay him passage money for going to England, and for returning to India; (e) to bear all his lodging and boarding charges; (f) to pay to Karsondas Mulji a monthly salary of Rs. 200; and (g) to openly dine with Karsondas on his return from England and to help him in all his caste difficulties. It is said that "every man has his moments of inspiration, when he feels and thinks and can do what at other times is impossible; but they are only moments, and not many of them at a time, and he should, therefore make the most of them." Karsondas had his moment of inspiration when he resolved to go to England and when he further resolved to accept the above-named most liberal terms. On 12th March, 1863, a day previous to Karsondas's sailing from Bombay, he and his friend Karsondas Madhavdas entered into a mutual written agreement and Karsondas sailed for England on the next day. It is wrong to think that Karsondas came down from his high pedestal of a reformer into an ordinary clerk in a mercantile firm. It is also wrong to think that Karsondas having become famous through the Libel Case, went to England to earn money to keep up his position in society. The fact is that since the time Karsondas came to know that England was accorded the first place among the countries of the world for its reforms, independence and skill in arts, and further that it was famous for its trade, industry, wealth and strength, he always cherished the desire to visit that country; and when the first opportunity presented itself before him, he availed himself of it and thus obtained another great chance of introducing as a pioneer, one more reform

for the benefit of his countrymen. Before he sailed three public Addresses were presented to him, one by the Buddhi Vardhak Sabha, another by the editors of different vernacular papers and periodicals of whom eight were Parsis and two Gujerati Hindus, and the third by Khoja gentlemen. In these Addresses, Karsondas's philanthropic work for the welfare of his countrymen and his noble services in the Libel Case were much praised. To all these, he gave suitable replies wherein he mentioned that he had only discharged his duty and that the success won in the Libel Case was not his personal triumph but that of Truth and Purity. Two other gatherings were held in honour of Karsondas. At one of these, his friends and admirers presented to Karsondas a purse of Rs. 8,000 for the benefit of his family. The Khojas also presented him a purse of Rs. 1,000 at the time of presenting an Address to him. Karsondas left Bombay for England on 13th March 1863. A large number of his friends and admirers of all communities went to the Apollo Bunder to wish him bon voyage.

In England, Karsondas did not keep good health and there too doctors recommended him to take animal food, but again he being dead against it declined to take it. There, he being a teetotaler, did not take any wine at all. On account of his poor health he could not stay there for more than a few months. In England India's grand old man Dadabhai Nowrosji introduced Karsondas as a great reformer to the Premier of England.

Karsondas returned to India at the end of September before the commencement of winter. He took great pains to write an account of his travels in England in the Gujerati language and got the same published in a

book form. In this book, being the first of its kind in Gujerati, at every page, Karsondas had made valuable suggestions for the good of his people. The Bombay Government gave substantial help to the extent of Rs. 6,000 for publishing this work. At the suggestion of the Governor of Bombay, the book was translated in the Marathi language.

### REFUSAL TO UNDERGO PRAYASCHITTA.

When Karsondas returned to India, out of his large circle of friends, he found only a few friends who proved to be genuine and ready to befriend him. These were Mr. Karsondas Madhavdas, Mr. Virchand Deepchand and Mr. Pranjivandas Waghji. All these gentlemen, without any fear of being excommunicated from their castes, openly dined with Karsondas Mulji. The Kapole caste to which Karsondas Mulji belonged excommunicated Karsondas and his family; and his caste saw to it that he and his family were also excommunicated from the entire fold of the Baniya Mahajan (collection of all the Baniya sub-castes). This was so hard a punishment at that time that Karsondas found it difficult to get any servant to serve him. When some persons broached the subject of Karsondas's re-admission into the caste, the Kapole Sheths replied that they would do so when Karsondas would have the boldness to drink one "sher" of hot molten lead. The Sheths and the caste were, however, willing to readmit Karsondas if he performed the Prayaschitt or purification ceremony; but Karsondas, having done nothing wrong, but something good, declined to perform by way of hypoorisy, any penitential ceremony when there was nothing for him to repent. This was the third turning-point in his life. He remained throughout

his life, an outcast so far as the Bombay Baniya Mahajan was concerned.

#### SECOND VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Karsondas was not at all deterred by this irrational punishment meted out to him and his family. He was again in demand for a second visit to England, but this time his visit was purely for a political object. He consented to go to England on behalf of the Jain community, in connection with the chronic dispute between that community and the Palitana Durbar. But before he went to England, he toured through Kathiawar, stayed for a month at Rajkot and thus thoroughly prepared himself for the mission that was entrusted to him. He sailed for England in 1867 and returned to India before the commencement of the cold season, on account of his poor state of health. During his second visit, he made good preparations for publishing another volume of his travels in Europe. but this dear wish of his never fructified owing to his early death. Karsondas had also greatly desired to visit America.

#### PARSEE AND EUROPEAN FRIENDS TO RESCUE.

During the share mania period in Bombay, in the year 1864, Karsondas earned well in share speculation: but ultimately he suffered heavily. He became a debtor and was much harrassed by his Hindu friends; yet by good fortune, he was saved from utter ruin by his Parsi and European friends.

In 1865, after a good deal of study and research, Karsondas published his book "The Sect of Maharajas", his monumental work in English. It was first written by him and then a learned English friend of his corrected it.

## SERVICES TO KATHIAWAR STATES.

On 20th December 1867, Karsondas was appointed as an Assistant Superintendent to the Political Agent of Kathiawar to administer the state of Rajkot, during the minority of the Thakore Saheb. He worked at this post with great ability and thorough integrity for nearly two years and a half. Although he had served in the triple capacities of a teacher, an author and a journalist, he had never any practical experience as an administrator; but at Rajkot, the Thakore Saheb being a minor, Karsondas had the unique opportunity of conducting the Administration, without any hindrance, in the best manner he liked. He introduced many reforms and became very popular among all classes. Besides his duties as an Administrator, he looked after the education of the minor Thakore Saheb. The Political agent was entirely satisfied with Karsondas's work; and hence he was rewarded by being appointed as a Special Assistant in charge of Limree on a monthly salary of Ra. 500. Before he left Rajkot, the Rajkot Durbar Lady, the Rajkot Mahajan and the educated portion of the city presented to Karsondas three Farewell Addresses containing the just praises of his administration. At Limree too, Karsondas proved a successful Administrator, so much so, that his biographer mentions that long after Karsondas's death, his name was remembered by all with feelings of great affection. Both at Rajkot and at Limree, the Vaishnava and the Jain Baniyas had free social intercourse with Karsondas and his family and that too unasked by Karsondas; further at Rajkot, through Karsondas's efforts, the Rajkote Baniya and Jain Mahajans had passed a resolution to allow all Baniyas to go to foreign countries without any trouble

from their Mahajan. In connection with this happy result, he wrote to a friend as follows:—

“Now, the Baniyas of this place will be able to go to Europe without any trouble, and for that their castes will not mete out to them any punishment in Rajkot, Gondal and other Talukas. With this result, all friends will feel pleased because God has so nicely rewarded my patience.”

For Karsondas's good life and deeds the Nabab Saheb of Junagadh held a big special Durbar and presented “Sarpav” to him.

There are some more elements which must be noted while we are considering Karsondas's activities as a State Administrator. Karsondas's education was not of a very high order. It was as much as possessed by a Matric-passed student, yet it sufficed for his purpose. Why this was so? It was because he was so trained in all his abilities of one kind and another that even if he was placed in the midst of difficult surroundings, he would have been able to see where he was, able to understand what the occasion called for, and further able to master his conditions, instead of being overwhelmed by them. Karsondas's true education enabled him to have practical, live, and comprehensive command of his abilities, and the full development of his native resources. He was master of himself, and master of his surroundings. He was truly educated. Besides, he had come in contact with learned men of different communities, and having privately prosecuted his studies in his leisure hours and having got the immense advantage of travelling in advanced countries, his mind was so much cultivated that it would have shone out in each and every walk of life



It was for this very reason that Sir Bartle Frere, the late Governor of Bombay, spoke of Karsondas as a man who would have been successful in any age or country as a social reformer, and a true martyr to his principles. Further, at Rajkot and at Limree, he proved a successful administrator because he had closely studied the good and bad points of the rule in the Native States.

But above all these causes, if the true secret of his success has to be searched, it would be found lying in the noble trait of his character, viz., his strict integrity. The touch-stone of his exemplary character made every situation in which he had to work, a thorough success.

#### THE FIRST WIDOW MARRIAGE AMONG KAPOLES.

While Karsondas was at Limree, he got again a noble opportunity not only of approving the cause of widow re-marriage on paper as he had done at the commencement of his career when he attempted to write a paper on widow re-marriage but in actual life. By great tact and thorough secrecy, he brought about the first model re-marriage between a young Kapole widow named Dhankore and his good Kapole Baniya friend, Mr. Madhavdas Rughnathdas. This he did at the risk of his life. Mr. K. N. Kabraji, speaking in honour of Miss Manning in 1893, spoke about this widow re-marriage and Karsondas's share in it in the following terms:—"In the anxious deliberations for bringing about the re-marriage of Madhavdas with a Hindu widow was the late Mr. Karsondas Mulji, the famous hero of the Maharaj Libel Case. Till now I have not come across any other Hindu reformer who could equal him in earnest zeal and labour for bringing about reforms like the late Karsondas

Mulji." Mr. Madhavdas Rughnathdas has graphically narrated the whole history of the way in which Karsondas helped him, and that piece of autobiography is worth perusal even at this time. The book was written in the year 1877, but it reveals the most important fact that the cause of young widows had not prospered even then. This shows why the step taken by Karsondas in the teeth of great opposition, was so risky and hence one which reflected great credit on Karsondas who was chiefly instrumental in bringing it about. Here it is worthwhile to mention that Madhavdas Rughnathdas on his part was bold enough to take the highly risky step of marrying a widow because of the influence exerted on him by Karsondas. Madhavdas said: "Owing to my being associated with a true and great reformer for a long period, my thoughts had also taken a tendency towards reform." Mr. K. N. Kabraji, speaking about Karsondas's active part in this marriage, said: "The late Karsondas had managed the bringing about of this re-marriage with such zeal, care, and rejoicing; as if his own children were to be married; and it was a fortunate circumstance that Karsondas gave all help in this marriage; but for it, we have very great doubt whether the remarriage would have come off so successfully as it did." What Karsondas was to the re-married couple is plainly seen by Madhavdas's certificate that spontaneously came forth from his grateful heart when he heard about the very sad news of Karsondas's death. He said: "In all our difficulties, the patient Karsondas always helped us. His friendship and advice were invaluable. On seeing such a good and faithful friend to be on our side we were so much emboldened and encouraged that we were quite able to withstand with courage and strength all the

onslaughts of our enemies, and cared little for their attacks. One can imagine the irreparable loss sustained by us by losing such a great helper. We were courageous because of the courage of Karsondas. What shall we do in the absence of such help? How shall we face the continuous attacks of our enemies without the presence of Karsondas? The instant I heard the sad news of his demise, I became nearly unconscious. I lost all courage. My dear wife Dhankore cried piteously. Our great prop, our right hand, all our hopes and aspirations, vanished with the passing away of Karsondas". At this marriage Karsondas acted as Dhankore's godfather and as such, he performed "Kanyadan" of Dhankore to Madhavdas. Karsondas presented to Dhankore as a wedding gift four gold bangles. How Dhankore valued this gift is seen by Madhavdas's words used by him in one of his letters to Karsondas. He said "This wedding gift of his, Dhankore has till this day preserved as a sacred and dear memento of her social happiness."

#### A CHARACTERISTIC MESSAGE FROM DEATHBED

Karsondas had a weak constitution. He was suffering now and then from various diseases like lung trouble, piles, etc. He took care of his health, but owing to pressure of administrative work at Rajkot and Limree, he was obliged to sacrifice health to duty and he worked beyond his strength. For many years, his chief complaint was internal piles. Over-work produced its effect. Nature had her revenge. Karsondas became seriously ill. He consulted both Aurvedic Valds and allopathic doctors at Limree. His health continued to decline. While he was dangerously ill, feeling that his end might come soon, he once gave the following farewell

message to his Parsee medical adviser :—" If I die, tell my caste-brothers that I have neither said nor done anything which may prove harmful to their interests; yet if they have felt my conduct to be of that kind, I beg to be forgiven. I have no enmity with the Gosain Maharajas or their votaries, the Vaishnavas. All the strenuous labours I have taken were for their welfare and for the reformation of the sect of the Vallabhacharyas. Instead of being glad for what I have done, the Maharajas and their devotees have not left any stone unturned to persecute me. For this ingratitude on their part, I pardon them all. I do not cherish any ill-will in my heart against them. Please to publish these sentiments to the parties concerned after my death." Karsondas, when he found his condition becoming critical sent for expert medical aid from Bombay, but when it came, it was too late. Dr. Pandurang Gopal observed his "placid and hopeful" countenance showing that he was not afraid of death and was quite prepared to meet it at any time. As a farewell message he said to this doctor :—"I have tried to do my duty to my countrymen. If, in so doing, I have made enemies I have had no desire to do so. I pray for God's light and mercy. I pray for friends and foes that He may have compassion on both." Karsondas called his wife, and bade her a loving farewell. He then became delirious and died a peaceful death at the early age of 38, on 28th August 1871 at 9 a. m. at Limree. His funeral was attended by nearly three thousand persons of all communities. Limree observed the day of his death as a day of mourning by observing a complete 'hartal'. The entire Press announced his death with regret and wrote suitable obituary articles applauding his praiseworthy deeds. Mr. W. W. Anderson, the political Agent

of Kathiawar, issued a special Notification on the day of his death narrating Karsondas's good services. For the first time, in the case of a private Indian citizen, the Government of Bombay issued a special Notification on 14th September 1871, wherein Karsondas's services were highly praised. Karsondas was a Justice of the Peace. He was a nominated Fellow of the University of Bombay. He was also a member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

### THREE GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS.

Karsondas, during his lifetime, wrote several Gujarati works. All his books contain good moral lessons. Throughout his life, his main object was to improve the condition of his people, through his writings and through his speeches. He wrote much and intended to write more. He delivered, during his short career, very useful and instructive lectures. Although he was persecuted by his caste people, and put to all sorts of troubles and inconveniences by the orthodox people, he discharged his duties fearlessly. In one of his works, Karsondas quotes his favourite author Samuel Smiles who said: "The battle of life, in by far the greater number of cases, must necessarily be fought up-hill; and to win it without a struggle were perhaps to win it without honour. If there were no difficulties, there would be no success; if there were nothing to struggle for, there would be nothing to be achieved. Difficulties may intimidate the weak, but they act only as a wholesome stimulus to men of pluck and resolution. All experience of life indeed serves to prove that the impediments in the way of human advancement may, for the most part, be overcome by steady good conduct,

honest zeal, activity, perseverance, and above all by a determined resolution to surmount difficulties, and stand up manfully against misfortune." This passage seems to have wonderfully influenced Karsondas, and it appears, when we review his whole life, that what is stated therein is a just pronouncement on the life of Karsondas. Karsondas was fortunate in achieving three mighty reforms: First in thoroughly exposing in his pioneer paper, "The Satya Prakash," the immoralities of the Maharajas, with a view to improve them. Second, in boldly going to England and making the way of other Baniyas more easy. Third, in his bringing about, through his strenuous efforts, the first model widow re-marriage in his own Kapole Baniya community between a couple, through whose instrumentality so many other re-marriages were brought about, when doing so was considered to be entirely against Shastras and was likely to endanger the lives of their promoters. Karsondas fearlessly exposed immoralities he noticed prevalent in the sect of the Maharajas, although he was born in that sect, was initiated in the tenets of that sect and was even bred up in the atmosphere of that sect. Karsondas took the Maharajas only as religious preceptors but never believed them to be either Gods or incarnations of Gods. It is said that "The martyr cannot be dishonoured. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame: every prison, a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house, enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side." This proved completely true in Karsondas's case. Jadunathji's own folly in filing a suit with a view to ruin Karsondas, the persecution to which he was put, before and at the time of the Maharaja

Libel Case and after it was over, and to crown all, the persecution of him and his family by the caste, instead of cowing down the spirit of brave Karsondas instilled more zeal into him and enabled him to boldly venture a second visit to England, and to dare to bring about a first widow re-marriage in his own community and made him aspire to do many worthy things in the future.

Karsondas had the spirit of a Savonarola, a Martin Luther and a Giordano Bruno. In his reformation work he had the active help and sympathy of noble-minded men of all communities like Sir Bartle Frere, the Governor of Bombay, Dr. John Wilson, Dr. Bhau Daji, Mr. Sorabji Shapoorji Bengali, Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji, Kavi Narmadashunker Lalshunker, Sheth Mathuradas Lowji, Sheth Gokaldas Tejpal, Dr. Dhirajram Dalpatram, Rao Saheb Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik, Mr. K. N. Kabraji, and several others. The late Rao Saheb Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik admired Karsondas so much that he called himself a "sepoys" in the army of reform and called Karsondas to be the "Sirdar." Sir Bartle Frere used to say that he was proud of Karsondas. As Karsondas was a true and fearless writer and speaker and as he had nobly spurned all monetary temptations, he left behind him a modest fortune of Rupees 23,000 only. At the time of Karsondas's death, his wife was only twenty-six years old. After a year and a half after Karsondas's death, through the hard efforts of Sheth Bengali and Sheth Dosabhai Framji Karaka, Karsondas's wife, her four sons and her daughter were re-admitted to the Kapole Baniya caste after paying a fine and after performing the penitentiary ('prayschitta') ceremony at Nasik.

## MEMORIALS.

On 11th September 1871, a Committee was formed to collect funds to perpetuate Karsondas's memory, with Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji as Chairman and Seth Sorabji Shapurji Bengali as Honorary Secretary. Among the members of the Committee one finds the names of the Political Agent, Col. W. W. Anderson, Dr. Bhau Daji, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, Messrs. T. C. Anstey, Premabhai Hemabhai, Nowrosji Fardoonji, and Virchund Dipchund. Among the subscribers we find the names of the following prominent persons:—Sir Munguldas Nathubhai, Mr. W. W. Wedderburn, Sir Cowasji Jehangir Readymony, Sheth Morarji Gokuldas, Sheth Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, Mr. F. S. P. Lely, Sheth Gokuldas Kahandas, Mr. Zaverilal Umiashunker, Sheth Jerajbhai Pirbhai, Sheth Khatau Makanji, Sheth Bhaishunker Nanabhai, Sheth Mansukhram Suryaram, Sheth Ardeshir Framji Moos, Mr. J. N. Graham, and Mr. J. P. Negrapont. Out of Rs. 3265 collected, a sum of Rs. 3,000 was donated to the University of Bombay for awarding an annual prize to the writer of the best essay in English on any moral or social subject. This offer was accepted by the University. In Kathiawar, a Fund was started to commemorate Karsondas's memory. A Parsi gentleman founded a scholarship in his name for the benefit of the pupils of Dr. Bhau Daji Girls' School. At Matheran, his friends and admirers collected a Fund and founded a Public Library in his name. Thus in various ways, his memory was enshrined.

While surveying Karsondas's life the first thought that strikes a careful observer is that during the few years of his active young life, when he was not keeping good health,



when he was the only individual of his family who held lofty views and did reformatory work, when his own father was against him, and when he had, as his life-long companion, a lady who was uncultured and unable to appreciate the greatness of her husband, one cannot but wonder at the amount of social service he was able to do.

Karsondas was a man of medium size and had a delicate constitution. He was fairly white. The nobility of his soul beautifully lighted up his face and made it serene. His usual dress was a turban, long coat, pants, shoes and stockings. He always put on neat and clean clothes. He disliked putting on "dhotur" as other Hindus did, because that kind of dress exposed the body, and hence was considered by him to be an indecent dress. For the very reason he disliked Hindu women wearing thin 'sarees' and bodices called "Kanchlis" which exposed their bodies. When Karsondas put on pants for the first time and appeared in a public gathering, he became the target of criticism in the Hindu society so much that in the Gujarafi newspapers there was correspondence on the subject. One of the proprietors of a vernacular paper openly said:—"That boy Karsondas has been aping to be an Englishman."

#### THE RICH HERITAGE LEFT BY KARSONDAS MULJI

Karsondas was among a few people in his age and generation who stood on a higher ground and looked at life from a right standpoint. He was like a man standing on a watch-tower, to whom others turned and said not, "What of the night?" but "What of the morn and of the coming day?" The problem with him had always been,

how can his community be made better? and the desire of desires of his sincere and pure heart was to make himself a blessing to others. He conceived the true end of life to be blessed. He had mastered the secret of the blessed life and this helped him to live justly and generously, to live with open eyes and open heart and open hands and to do to others as he would that they should do to him. He was surrounded on all sides by mental slaves—men who had given up intellectual freedom and hence were the living coffins of their dead souls. He was a fountain of life, strength and joy, in the midst of his countrymen and countrywomen who glorified decay. He was faithful always to that which he believed to be true; he was faithful to his principles and his conscience when there were temptations to sacrifice them for place or pelf. He was faithful to his given word. Karsondas had faith in himself, faith in his mission and faith in God. He never lost faith in the redemption of his people. He strove to reform them. He passionately pleaded for right and justice. He boldly championed the liberty of body, mind and soul. He was both an individualist and a socialist. He was a practical idealist and a pioneer reformer. In all deeds of his, he dared to be himself. He borrowed not his light. He flew his own flag in the storm as well as in the calm. He aimed not at something the world prizes—fame, honour or riches. He was “a cinder blown into the eye of his generation.” He had in his hands the sceptre of his leadership. He was the ideal of every man and woman who loved liberty. He hated falsehood; he loathed and despised hypocrisy with every fibre of his nature, and he detested sham and pretence. He knew that the Vaishnava Maharajas who claimed to be gods themselves were impostors and therefore he

essayed the herculean task of overthrowing greed entrenched behind religion. In the triumph of ignorant, crafty and immoral priests he saw the fall of man. He received but scant appreciation for his efforts to free men and women from ecclesiastical slavery, but he continued his magnificent crusade against ignorance, illiteracy, superstition and priestly tyranny, at the risk of his life, for nearly two decades. He suffered all hardships, he withstood all temptations and retained the purity of his soul till last.

They are slaves who will not choose  
 Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,  
 Rather than in silence shrink  
 From the truth they needs must think.  
 They are slaves who dare not be  
 In the right with two or three.

Russell Lowell.

He criticised the world not by censure only, but by the example of his great life. By fair dealing, justice, kindness, self-control, and the great work of helping others while he helped himself, his life proved a worship. He lived religion; he lived God's truth into life; and his own approving conscience and the "well done" which awaited him was his best reward. After the Maharaja Libel Case was over a paper called "The Poona Observer" had prophesied: "The religion of the Vallabhacharyas will not survive this blow; at least we hope so for the honour of human nature." This prophecy, unfortunately for the cause of religion and morality, has not proved true yet the entire Vaishnava world of the sect of Vallabhacharya had its eyes opened and its mentality changed. The votaries of the Maharajas have extricated themselves

a good deal from the clutches of their spiritual guides and the Maharajas have not the audacity to practise licentiousness as they did before Karsondas's time. It was Karsondas, beyond all other men, who wrought the change, because he had the sympathetic ability to take up ideas that were floating in the air, fuse them and pass them back clothed in words that burned. The true, the good, and the beautiful in man, woman and child—this was the holiest trinity to him. Humanity was the great living thing to his heart. He thought, spoke and wrote freely and honestly. As he thought, he acted; when he had anything to say, he said it aloud. He was not ashamed of his thoughts. He did not hide or go round the corner, or beat about the bush. He spoke honestly what he saw, what he thought, what he knew. He was feared by the orthodox but loved by the enlightened. His amiable disposition, his sweet manners, his ceaseless striving to better his people, in the state and position in which he was placed by thought, words and deeds, both by his precepts and practice, made his life worthy of God and a blessing to his community. He was not an illustrious man of letters. He was not a man of University degrees nor a man of exceptional abilities, yet by the nobility of his character and by the beauty of his philanthropic deeds, gentle music breathed forth from his life through all his days. There was nothing secular in his truly consecrated life. For the service of his people he spent himself. There was no meanness in him; through all his veins ran honest blood. He was free from vanity. He never picked up the flowers of flattery laid at his feet. He did his duty, and whether his acts brought applause or condemnation did not ruffle his superb sincerity.

Abused, lied about, slandered, he pitied his defamers and despised their work. To the last, he kept faith with his heart and mind. He believed in humanity, in all the good things that the world was working for. His social conscience was perfectly developed. He hence discharged his debt to his country as its dutiful son by devoting all his energies to the social and moral progress of his motherland. He took up "the cause of new truth as against old prejudice, the cause of selflessness, the cause of justice for all as against love of self or ease, and the cause of conscientious industry as against indolence, indifference, and slipshod work." He found his highest enjoyment in the consciousness of progress. His times of greatest pleasure were when he tried and won some higher peak of difficulty, trodden under foot some evil-refused some pleasant temptation for truth's sake. He had a kindly heart, a generous soul, the spirit of charity, magnanimity, and a kindly feeling towards all men. He prepared the ground, by educating the people, and awakening in them a moral sense, and a social conscience. He never laid down his arms, never surrendered. Karsondas helped in his way, the advance of the cause of progress in his country and in the mind of his countrymen. His righteous life of service and sacrifice stamped God's seal on this earth. He reaped the harvest of joy, love and beauty. He lived as if he were to die on the next day. Generally when a man dies people ask: "What property has he left?" But God who examines the dead asks: "What good deeds has he sent before him?" When death was staring Karsondas in the face, the fact of his having lived faithfully and conscientiously fulfilled his duties made death restful to him. Karsondas desired not a long life. He said: "Know this for

certain that a man does not get more happiness by living a long life; but on the contrary he gets himself more entangled in social nets and worldly matter." He welcomed death. Look at what he thought about death: "O man! do not forget your death. Ever remember it. By doing this, you will do virtuous deeds, and you will give up folly and pride. Then death will be your favourite word, and you will never be frightened with it. Many people are afraid to die because they have during their lives done unworthy deeds. There are some people who are not afraid of their death because they have made all preparations to meet it and being afraid of it at every moment, have done virtuous deeds." It was the happiest lot of Karsondas to depart from mankind without having had any taste of lying and hypocrisy, and luxury and pride. He counted death as a new birth to a higher state of being. The death of simple, good and great Karsondas, in the midst of his usefulness and in the prime of his life, cut off a blessed ministry of helpfulness in the circle in which he had dwelt; but his influence continues. He has left in the world a two-fold ministry, character of the things through which others were made better, or inspired to do like things. Karsondas died as he lived. While men and women live who would be true to themselves and to their call, who value sacrifice and duty above power and success, so long will there be men and women who will love him and be taught by him. India cannot afford to forget Karsondas, and he will not be forgotten.

Time has brought its revenge. The city in which Karsondas was born has celebrated the Centenary of the good and great reformer Karsondas, but this

ought not to suffice. Three hundred years after Bruno's death, a procession of some thirty thousand people, headed by the Syndic and the Aldermen of the city with flags and banners and military music, marched across Rome to the Campo dei Fiori to unveil a statue of Bruno erected on the spot where he had suffered martyrdom. Let us follow in the footsteps of the admirers of Giordano Bruno and erect a monument to our righteous reformer in the city of his birth and the arena of his great deeds for which he had to suffer so much, and thereby testify publicly that India's noblest sons are well appreciated by their grateful countrymen and countrywomen for whose welfare they sacrificed their all.

All that was physical of Karsondas has long since mixed with the elements, yet it is hard to believe that Nature, so jealous of waste in all else, would be so wanton in destruction of her most precious gifts. Life has made provision for all contingencies, and shall we be wrong in thinking that death has done as much. The projects cut down in their inception by death, the passionate desires baulked of attainment by the arrows shot out of the dark—do you think they are lost? How can they be? Who can conceive of the annihilation of a force? "Life outlasts its moulds; fire outlasts the furnace in which it glows; the ashes in the grate liberate forces which pass into newer centres of activity along the line of their innate characters."

The memory of Karsondas's consecrated life is a light which sheds the brightest rays that fall on the lives of thousands. Let us, his countrymen, and countrywomen, cherish his memory and ever keep green in our grateful

hearts the remembrance of all the good that he did  
unselfishly for us all.

Alike are life and death  
When life in death survives.  
And the uninterrupted breath  
Inspires a thousand lives.

Were a star quenched on high,  
For ages would its light,  
Still travelling downward from the sky,  
Shine on our mortal sight.

So when a great man dies,  
For years beyond our ken  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men.

Longfellow.



## CHAPTER II.

### The Hero of the Maharaja Libel Case.

Call it Divine Dispensation, call it a mere coincidence, at the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the second quarter of the same century, four great personalities were born in the world who were destined to effect revolutionary changes of a smaller or a greater extent in the religious world of their times. Their names are Dayanand Saraswati, Karsondas Mulji, Charles Bradlaugh and Robert Green Ingersoll.

Dayanand was born at Kathiawar in the year 1824 A. D.; and Karsondas was born at Bombay in 1832 A. D. Just as at the dawn of the sixteenth century, God sent Martin Luther to reform the Church in Europe under the sway of the Papacy, so Indians badly needed Martin Luthers of Hindusthan to do similar work in India; and in the person of Dayanand and Karsondas, God supplied India's want; and thereby the prophetic vision of Shri Krishna enunciated in the following famous verses of the Bhagvad Gita was fulfilled:—

"Wherever virtue subsides, and wickedness raises its head, I manifest myself to restore the glory of religion."

In America, this vision was fulfilled by the birth of Robert G. Ingersoll in 1833. Ingersoll was one of the greatest of all rebels against conventional religion, and one of the greatest of all defenders of liberty. In Europe, in 1833 was born Charles Bradlaugh, and in the birth of this prophet of freedom and the most formidable enemy of organized Christianity the above-mentioned prophecy was realized.

I have to write here only about Karsondas; but having alluded to Swami Dayananda, it would suffice

Hearts the remembrance of all the good that he did  
Unselfishly for us all.

Alike are life and death  
When life in death survives.  
And the uninterrupted breath  
Inspires a thousand lives.

Were a star quenched on high,  
For ages would its light,  
Still travelling downward from the sky,  
Shine on our mortal sight.

So when a great man dies,  
For years beyond our ken  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men.

Longfellow.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Hero of the Maharaja Libel Case.

Call it Divine Dispensation, call it a mere coincidence, at the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the second quarter of the same century, four great personalities were born in the world who were destined to effect revolutionary changes of a smaller or a greater extent in the religious world of their times. Their names are Dayanand Saraswati, Karsondas Mulji, Charles Bradlaugh and Robert Green Ingersoll.

Dayanand was born at Kathiawar in the year 1824 A. D.; and Karsondas was born at Bombay in 1832 A. D. Just as at the dawn of the sixteenth century, God sent Martin Luther to reform the Church in Europe under the sway of the Papacy, so Indians badly needed Martin Luthers of Hindusthan to do similar work in India; and in the person of Dayanand and Karsondas, God supplied India's want; and thereby the prophetic vision of Shri Krishna enunciated in the following famous verses of the Bhagvad Gita was fulfilled:—

“Wherever virtue subsides, and wickedness raises its head, I manifest myself to restore the glory of religion.”

In America, this vision was fulfilled by the birth of Robert G. Ingersoll in 1833. Ingersoll was one of the greatest of all rebels against conventional religion, and one of the greatest of all defenders of liberty. In Europe, in 1833 was born Charles Bradlaugh, and in the birth of this prophet of freedom and the most formidable enemy of organized Christianity the above-mentioned prophecy was realized.

I have to write here only about Karsondas; but having alluded to Swami Dayananda, it would suffice

our purpose to mention here the great tributes paid to his personality by Sjt. Aurobindo Ghose and Paul Richard. Aurobindo Ghose has written :—"Dayananda was a man with God in his soul, vision in his eyes and power in his hands to hew out of life an image according to his vision. He seized justly on the Vedas as India's Book of Ages and had the daring conception to build on what his penetrating glance perceived in it a whole nationhood. He was a very soldier of Light, a warrior in God's world, a sculptor of men and institutions, a bold and rugged victor of the difficulties which matter presents to spirit. And the whole sums itself up to me in a powerful impression of spiritual practicality."

Paul Richard has written :—

"He came to break your idols, to restore your gods.

He came to break your prisons—your castes, to liberate your souls.

He came to open your sepulchres, to resuscitate your nation.

Only a Rishi can do these things. When they are done, let us do homage to the Rishi as he passes.

Let us do homage to Rishi Dayananda who has passed. And let us turn our regard straight in front of us to the others who are coming."

The story of our hero Karsondas depicted here illustrated the great principle that "the greatest works that have been done have been done by the ones." No learned society discovered America, but one man, Columbus. No association of science revealed the clue to interpret the laws of the heavenly bodies, but one man, Galileo. No Parliament saved English liberties, but one man, Pym. By one man, Howard, prisons were purified. By one woman, Miss Nightingale, the

disgraceful nursing system was reformed. By one Clarkson, the reproach of slavery was taken away. To one, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, our country owes the passing of the widow Remarriage Act of 1856. By one man, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the horrible custom of Sutee was declared illegal. By one Gandhi, the mentality of the whole Indian nation has been changed. Doubtless, these men found their coadjutors, but all through ages God has put immense honour upon individuals. Surely it was due to one man Karsondas that Gujarat, Cutch and Kathiawar would owe an immense debt of gratitude for ever for the light that he shed on the evils perpetrated by the spiritual guides of the Sect of the Maharajas under the guise of religion. At the head of the Reformation Movement of the Sect of Maharajas, stood Karsondas as the leading and directing spirit, just as the great personality of Martin Luther stood at the head of the Reformation at the Papal despotism.

#### A GRIM FIGHT AGAINST SUPERSTITION.

God appointed to Karsondas a separate, special mission, on a somewhat smaller scale than what was assigned by Him to Swami Dayanand, but none the less, looking to the enormity of the deep-seated evil Karsondas had to battle with, his work was equally important; and from the most honourable way in which he discharged it by following the light which was vouchsafed to him, we could safely say, that he immortalized his name by showing his own colours and by sounding his own note. His success in life should not be measured by what he had actually accomplished, but by the opposition he encountered, the suffering he endured and the courage with which he maintained the struggle against overwhelming odds. If we looked at the great workers of the world, we would see that they fought their way to triumph

against all sorts of opposing obstacles. Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* in blindness and poverty. Luther, before he could establish the Reformation, had to encounter the prestige of a thousand years, the united power of an imperious hierarchy and the ban of the German Empire. Instances of this type are numerous.

Karsondas's biographer and friend Rao Saheb Mahipatram Rupram considered the Maharaja Libel Case to be a memorable event worthy of being noted in the history of India. Mr. Navalram Luxmiram recognised his work of exposing the immoralities practised by the Maharajas to be his main life work which had made Karsondas's name famous both in Europe and in India, and it was owing to his noble work in that direction, that in the history of Social Reform, the name of that brave soul would remain immortal. The *Pall Mall Gazette* mentioned in 1865, that this famous trial "deserves the heedful study of our legislators and philanthropists." The late Governor of Bombay, Sir Bartle Frere said: "The whole history of the Maharaja trial is one of the greatest interest to any one who takes an interest in the ancient or modern religions of India." Mr. F. S. P. Lely, the Commissioner of Northern Division called this case, in some respects, "the greatest trial of modern times since the trial of Warren Hastings". In the life-story of our hero, this trial held a predominantly supreme position and to appreciate thoroughly Karsondas's work in connection therewith, it is essential that one should know something of the history of the Vallabhacharya Sect from its very commencement, its tenets, its practices, etc., so as to see how gradually, after the founding of that sect, the successors of Vallabhacharya introduced such novel innovations as to give birth to

immoral practices. To narrate this history would be an unpleasant task, but unless this was done it would not be possible to appreciate fully the magnitude of Karsondas's work. The degradation that had crept in the sect during Karsondas's time was so great as to compel the late Governor of Bombay to write:—"Maharajas have reduced philosophical Epicureanism to practice in forms more hideous and degrading than almost any which the Hindu Pantheon could furnish."

We have had a glimpse of the times during which Karsondas was born. It is not necessary to repeat what has already been mentioned. Suffice it for me to say that in the Gujarati community, abysmal ignorance prevailed among the Bhattias, Banyas and other sectaries of the Pushti Marga or the Vallabhacharya Sect, and hence they became superstitious. They were mental slaves because they gave unreasoning obedience to their spiritual guides. As they were lacking in intellectual light they remained "intellectual paupers and vagrants, covered over with the soiled and faded rags of superstition." Hypocrisy and tyranny of the Maharajas fed upon their liberties. To attain freedom they needed intelligence. In this world of ignorance and superstition was born Karsondas, a man endowed with the glorious heart of a hero. Reason being the very essence of humanity, Karsondas did not throw away Reason at the command of the hereditary priests of the sect in which he was born and bred. It is wisely said that the man who cannot think is less than man; the man who will not think is traitor to himself; the man who fears to think is superstition's slave. Hence a man should think, use all his senses, examine and reason. Karsondas did this and

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found out the truth. He loved the truth thus perceived. He was not afraid for selfish reasons to hide it. His chivalrous soul had the moral courage to give out his honest thought. His was a brave heroic soul born to dispel the darkness of ignorance prevailing among the followers of the sect of the Maharajas. He stood so grandly, so proudly, in spite of opposition, hatred, and prospect of violent death for what he believed to be the truth. Like a true man, he remained intellectually pure, maintained his self-respect and preserved the spotless and stainless veracity of his soul. He was both the finder and the publisher of truth and hence was a public benefactor. Karsondas was a torch in the darkness; he was a beacon in the night enveloped in the darkness of superstition. He was a hero who slew the monster of ignorance and fear.

#### SENSELESS AND HEARTLESS ORTHODOXY.

Orthodox priests have always been heartless and relentless towards the brave and thoughtful men among their followers. They have calumniated and tortured such people. The flower of pity has never blossomed in their hearts. In their hands, Justice never held aloft the scales. They have been the slanderers of the really great men of their country. In past times, they denounced Lyell, the great geologist, for giving facts to the world. They hated and belittled Humboldt, one of the greatest and most intellectual of the race. They ridiculed and derided Darwin, the best judge of the value of a fact, the most wonderful discoverer of truth that the world has produced. Instead of being "the heralds of the ever-coming day" they have proved themselves to be "the bats, the owls that inhabit ruins that hate the light." They denounced honest men who expressed their thoughts as blasphemers, and did what

hey could to close their mouths. In spite of this kind of treatment meted out to Karsondas by the Maharajas in Bombay, his brave actions have glittered like stars and have given a lie direct to all the dogmas of superstition. Karsondas found the Truth and lighted with brave hands the sacred torch of Reason.

He had absolute devotion for and unwavering faith in the cause of Truth and Purity. He sought nothing for himself, thought nothing of himself; he had a noble love of giving himself for the service of his ignorant countrymen and more for his country-women, which, enabled him to transfuse the force of his personality into the glorious work to which he had devoted his powers. If Karsondas had to his credit the only work that I treat of here for enlightening his people, that alone would have entitled him to a permanent place in our grateful hearts. It is wrong to judge of noble lives from the quantity of work put in by them for the welfare of their people. The right and proper thing to appraise their lives at their true worth is to see first and foremost the quality of their work. Karsondas put his best mind and heart into the cause of Truth and Purity against the Maharajas of the Vallabhacharya Sect both before and after the Maharaja Libel Case and at the time when this case was being conducted in the Supreme Court of Bombay. This work of his therefore ought to be reckoned as his great and noble work and no other, because into it he poured the glory of a noble heart, and made it great as it incarnated a fine and loyal spirit.

At the time of the birth of Vallabhacharya, the Hindu religion consisted of three main sects of Vaishnavas, Saivas, and Shaktas or the adorers of Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti. The sect of Vaishnavas was divided into twenty

sects of which one was that of Vallabhacharis or Rudra Sampradayis or Pushti Margis. This sect was also known as the sect of the Maharajas. The tenets and practices of this sect considerably varied from the pure doctrines of the Hindu religion which, to state broadly, consisted in the belief in God, in the perception of the difference between good and evil, and in the conviction that God hated sin, and loved the righteous.

#### FOUNDER OF THE SECT.

The founder of the Vallabhacharya sect was born in Champaaranya in 1479 A. D. It is said in the works of this sect that when he was born "a palace of gold sprung up on the spot, and the gods from the heavens showered down flowers, the 'houris' danced around, and the heavenly songsters sang; divine music filled the air, and gods descended in celestial cars to see the prodigy." He widely travelled in different parts of India for nine years, and when he returned to Brindaban, it is said that he was honoured by a visit from the God Shri Krishna in person, who then enjoined him to introduce the worship of 'Bala Gopala' or 'Bala Krishna,' the Infant Krishna, and thus Vallabhacharya founded his faith—a faith which became widely diffused throughout Western India, under the sectarian name of Rudra Sampradaya or the religion of the Gokuletha Gosains. The Bhagvat Purana (a production of post-Vedic period) was the chief authority of the sect of Vallabhacharya. The Bhagwat consisted of twelve books; but Vallabhacharya selected the tenth book in which the history of Shri Krishna, as the Eighth Incarnation of Vishnu, was given. This book was translated from the Sanskrit into Brijbhasha under the name of "Prem Sagara," or the Ocean of Love. Vallabhacharya selected this book as the basis of the doctrines

he designed to teach his votaries. To this work we must look, as the source whence the Maharajas deduced originally the ideas which they have gradually expanded into the desecrating libertinism which they practised. Vyasa believed to be the metamorphosed Vishnu was the reputed author of this work, and Bhagvat was therefore held as a revelation from the Deity himself, and was considered of the highest authority and was received with profound respect. There was no doubt that the true character of Bhagvat was allegorical, whereas the Maharajas, by interpreting it literally to serve their own selfish ends, had converted its abstruse suggestions into a code of immorality, inculcating the most hideous sensuality. Vallabhacharya wrote several works, one of which was 'Bhagvata Tika Subhodhini', a commentary upon Bhagvat. In 1520 A. D. he established the image of Shri Nathji at Nathdwar in Ajmere. He became a sannyasi. When he entered the Ganges at Hanuman Ghat and when stooping into the water, he passed out of sight; a brilliant flame, it was said, arose from the spot, and in the presence of a host of spectators he ascended to heaven, and was lost in the firmament.

Rishi Dayananda, the Founder of the Arya Samaj and rightly named "The Luther of India," in his book (called "Satyatha Prakash" or 'The Illumination of the Right Path' in Chapter Eleventh, among other matters, treated of Gosainism at some length. Herein he mentioned that "the very foundation of this religion was laid upon untruth and fraud" and then pointed out how the Gosainjis cheated ignorant and credulous people and practised immorality. The Gosainjis call their faith "Path of Health" (Pushti Marga) but according to Swami Dayananda it ought to be named "Path of Leprosy"

(Kushthi Marga) or a "Way to Hell." He mentioned:—"It is not right that Gosainjis make their male and female disciples offer their persons, will and wealth; for their body is given away at the time of marriage to the husband or wife; then the will cannot be given to others; the body can be properly offered with the will. If the body is offered without the consent of will, it becomes adultery... To tell the truth, they committ many horrible and heinous sins. For instance, on the occasion of Carnival (holi) or Saturnalia, they squirt water by a syringe on the private parts of women. Whenever any body invites a Gosain to his house, he goes there and sits down like a wooden doll, neither speaking nor moving...he gazes at women with fixed attention. A woman is considered lucky if she is marked by the Gosain. Her husband, brother, relatives, mother, father, all become much pleased at it. All the women touch the feet of the Gosain in making a bow to him. He presses with his foot the finger of the woman whom he falls in love with or fixes his eye upon. The woman, her husband and other relations thank their stars for this favour of his. Her husband and the relatives press her to go to him to do the service of his feet (to lie with him). If it happens that her husband and relatives are not willing to send her to him, he accomplishes his end by means of pimps and panders, who properly speaking, are found in abundance in the Gosain's temples and with whom he is ever surrounded." Swami Dayananda advised Gosainjis as follows:—"Henceforth you should give up your frauds, falsehood and other evils; and embracing the beautiful Vedic path appointed by God enjoy the permanence of life by acquiring virtue, wealth, satisfaction and salvation."

Both Dayananda Swami and Karsondas, at the age of twenty-one, bade adieu to all the joys and comforts of a happy home. Their careers begin from this time. The mighty work of reforming Hinduism must be mainly and largely attributed to Swamiji. In the sacred domain of religion, Swamiji's object was to place Hindu society exactly into the same state as it was when there existed none of the eighteen Puranas, the source of modern Hinduism with its caste and idolatry, but when one God only was adored, and the Vedas only were studied and the sacrifice of "homa" (burning medicinal drugs for the purification of air) was practised.

Karsondas's object also appeared to be the same. There is no adequate material before us to come to a right decision about Karsondas's religious views. There is no doubt, however, that he was aiming at moral purification in religious matters, and that he had intense hatred against adultery and this made him feel too disgusted to go for worship to the Vallabhacharya temples. It was this disgust that led him to wage such a tough fight in his paper against the immoral practices of the Maharajas. He was born and bred in the sect of the Maharajas, and he first thought of improving his own sect; but it appeared that his real religious views were in favour of the Vedic religion. I am led to this view by the fact of Karsondas's publishing a small book called "Ved Dharma and Sacred Books after Vedas." He wanted to write a bigger work but his early death put an end to this project. In this brochure of 31 pages, we met with these lines: "Nothing is written in the Vedas about the incarnation of Vishnu and nothing is written therein about idol worship, yet all books acknowledge the religious

authority of the Vedas. It is evidently clear that it is for this reason the writers of the Puranas wanted to keep people ignorant." I am led to believe that like Swami Dayananda, Karsondas too cherished the ideal of reforming Hinduism to its pristine glory which it enjoyed before the 'Puranas'.

#### PERVERSION OF DOCTRINES.

After the death of Vallabhacharya, of his two sons, the younger Vithalnathji was installed on his father's 'gadi' as his successor. He made 252 proselytes. He wrote several works of importance and died at the ripe age of 77. He had settled at Gokul and he acquired the name of Gokul Gosainji. He had seven sons, each of whom established a separate 'gadi' in different parts of India. The fourth son Gokulnathji (Samvat 1608) wrote a commentary on the 'Siddhant Rahasya' and other books. In this commentary occurred the following words: "Consequently before he (a disciple) himself has enjoyed her, he should make over his lawful wife to the Maharaj and he should also make over his sons and daughters; after having got married he should before having himself enjoyed his wife, make an offering of her to the Maharaj, after which he should apply her to his own use." Karsondas quoted this commentary in his article in the Satya Prakash of the 21st October, 1860, whereupon arose the Libel case. In practice, the original text had been construed to mean and perverted to sanction a dedication to the Maharaj. The text apparently contemplated a dedication to God, and one could not definitely say what was intended by the writer. Karsondas inferred from the text the dedication to the Maharaja. It was from the time of Gokulnathji that the Vaishnava priests came to be known as Maharajas and it was from his time that open



immorality was construed to be sanctioned by the religious books of the Vaishnavas. The Maharajas are known by various names such as Goswamis or Lords of cows, Gokul Gosains or Gokulestha Gosains. Their worshippers are diffused throughout Bombay, Cutch, Kathiawar, Gujarat, and Central India; they mostly belonged to the Bhattia, Baniya and Lohana communities. Among the rich castes of Bhansalis, Marwadis, Kanbis, are also found some of the worshippers of the Maharajas. In the whole of India, the total number of Vaishnavas of the sect of Vallabhacharya, during Karsondas's time, was not more than two lakhs of people out of the total population of several crores. The chief temples of the sect of the Maharajas were at Mathura, Brindawan, Benares, Jagganathji, Dwarka, Shri Nathji, and Bombay. At the time of the Libel Case, there were 60 or 70 Maharajas dispersed throughout India; out of these 8 or 10 were in Bombay, one or two in Ahmedabad and one or two at Surat. In Bombay, the Maharajas' worshippers were nearly 10,000.

I would now narrate the ceremonies observed by the worshippers. The preliminary initiation of the votaries commenced very early in life at the age of 2, 3, or 4 years. The child was taken to the Maharaja, who spoke to the child the following formula of eight letters ("Shri Krishnah sharanam mama"—Shri Krishna is my refuge), and the child repeated the Mantra. The priest then passed round its neck a 'kanthi' or necklace of 'tulsi', and then the ceremony was complete. The second initiation called "Samarpan" or "Brahma-Sambhandha," i. e., connection with Brahma (the Supreme Being), signified absolute self-dedication to Shri Krishna, and his incarnation the Maharaja, took place in the case of a male at the age of

11 or 12 years. In the case of a female, it took place after or shortly before her marriage. The votary was required to repeat the Sanskrit formula daily after bathing alone, and that too mentally. The translation of the Sanskrit formula was as follows: "Om! Shri Krishna is my refuge. I, who am suffering the infinite pain and torment produced by enduring, for a thousand measured years, separation from Krishna, do to the worshipful Krishna, consecrate my body, organs of sense, life, heart, and other faculties, and wife, house, family, property, with my own self. I am thy slave, O Krishna."

For the performance of these ceremonies the Maharaj had to be paid fees according to the position and wealth of the votary, because the scale of these fees was not fixed at all.

We thus see that the Maharajas had very cleverly arranged to have the first initiation ceremony in infancy. They thus invaded the cradle and the nursery and in the brain of innocence, they planted the seeds of superstition. The nursery should not be an asylum for lies. By keeping the second initiation ceremony at the age of 11 or 12, they sowed the seeds of superstition and thereby paralysed the minds and polluted the imaginations of children.

Karsondas commenting upon these initiation ceremonies said:—"The new full sectary thus goes forth, although disencumbered of his sins, yet heavily burdened morally, and without a claim to any possession; for in this formality he has renounced every possession to his Maharaja. He goes forth to repeat his 'mantra', while telling the beads of his rosary. He now goes forth as the enthusiastic devotee of the Maharaja, to whom he has

desecrated the purity of his home, under the terrible threat of the denial of "the deliverance of his soul, and of its re-absorption into the divine essence;" under the threat, here also, of excommunication from all intercourse with his fellow-devotees, and under the prohibition of enjoying food, or participation in the worship of his idol. His contempt can be purged only by presents and submission, or by the bold step of forswearing the sect, which few have the moral courage to resolve upon, chained as they are by the relations of life, or the artificial bondage of a conventional condition of society. The woman goes forth a ruined victim, through the dissoluteness of the Maharaja, whom she has been taught to solicit by means of every possible artifice and blandishment and by enticing presents. She conceives herself to have been honoured by the approach of her god, to whose lust she has joyfully submitted. Her whole nature is thus corrupted."

I will now devote some space to the temple-worship of the Deity itself. The idol or the image of Thakurji was either of stone or brass, in the different temples and represented Shri Krishna in various attitudes which he was supposed to have assumed in the several periods of his earthly existence, either when performing uncommon feats or miracles, or living at particular places, or engaged in any peculiarly interesting scenes. The worship of the images was very sedulously performed, the most devoted homage being paid to them at fixed periods, eight times every day. There were also seasonal festivals when the idols were worshipped with more spectacular ceremony.

## HOW THE MAHARAJAS WERE WORSHIPPED

The first duty of the Vaishnavas belonging to the sect of the Maharajas while going to worship the idol, was to go to the Maharaja, who was found seated on a raised couch, and to prostrate themselves at his feet. The worshippers placed their fingers on the toes of the Maharaja, and then applied them to their eyes. The Maharajas could be worshipped at all hours of the day, except the times when they were busy in the worship of the idols.

### Different ways in which Maharajas misbehaved.

1. When the temple door was opened, the musicians playing upon the musical instruments sang songs descriptive of Shri Krishna's amorous sport with the 'Gopis'.

2. The Morning "Mangla" service in winter was performed at 4 o'clock in the morning, when it was quite dark; this time gave a good opportunity to the Maharajas to communicate with their female devotees who were their favourites and who much frequented the temple at this time.

3. During the worship itself the Maharajas decorated their persons in rich and gaudy dresses and this they specially did to attract the attention of their female devotees.

4. In the spring and on other important Hindu holidays, the Maharajas actually misbehaved with their female devotees. The mode of solicitation by the Maharajas consisted in throwing upon the female votaries small balls of red powder named "gulal" specially aiming at their breasts. On the occasion of the holi festival, it was customary for them to project from a syringe, yellow water towards worshippers but

chiefly at the female worshippers; they had even the audacity and the impudence even to squirt such water on the private parts of women. At the time of the Holi holiday, the Maharaja stood in the street near the temple and permitted his followers to hail him with 'gual.' Some of the Maharajas, on such occasions, threw the 'gual' in return on some female worshippers and indulged publicly in indecent and improper scenes.

5. When the devotees went to worship the Deity in the temple, their first duty was to go to the Maharaja and to prostrate themselves at his feet. They with great reverence placed the fingers on the toes of the Maharaja and then applied these fingers to their eyes as mentioned before. At this ceremony, when female devotees touched the toes, the Maharaja, when he was attracted by the beauty of some one of them, pressed the hand of the particular female to signify their wish to solicit her company in private. A female devotee whose hand was thus pressed, fully understood the significance of this secret sign, and feeling herself highly honoured yielded readily to the wishes of the Maharaja.

6. During the intervals of the worship of the Deity, Maharajas allowed themselves to be worshipped at all times of the day. During the "Uthapan" period of worship, which began at 2 p. m., the female members of the family visited the wives and daughters of the Maharajas. But some of them went to the Maharajas' bed-rooms with presents of costly eatables. These were accepted and some female devotees who were the favourites of the Maharaja were honoured by having sexual intercourse with them. Women who got this opportunity considered themselves to have been purified. Occasionally the Maharajas ravished even girls of 10 or 11 years of

age. Even when the Maharajas were in the sitting room speaking to their followers, if women came there with presents, the Maharajas immediately retired into the bed-room, then accepted the presents and ministered to their lust. Women had been known to part with their personal ornaments to purchase sexual intercourse with the Maharajas; and upon returning home, they used to represent to their husbands, or to the elders of the house, that their ornaments were lost in the crush of the throng while paying adoration to the idols.

7. In the intervals of the official priestly duties of the Maharajas, they had recourse to every variety of amusement and pleasure; and not a few rejoiced exceedingly in displaying indecent pictures to their female devotees, with a view to exciting their passions.

8. Women of the Vallabhacharya sect sang, in honour of the Maharajas and in their presence, indecent hymns, expressing the most unbridled desires, the most impatient longings, for the enjoyment of adulterous love.

### **The Maharajas' questionable conduct outside the houses of worship.**

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2. In the evenings, the Maharajas usually were invited to sumptuous entertainment to the houses of the wealthy Viashnavas, whither they went sumptuously attired and fragrant with attar of roses and other sweet-smelling perfumes, in order that they may be the more attractive to those with whom they came in contact. There Maharajas were offered money presents with flowers; and "arati" was performed before them as if they were themselves deities. At these meetings, the female devotees sang songs of a sensual nature.

I give below specimens of two songs:—

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To that dear soul having become a female slave,  
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3. On sad and joyful occasions, the Maharaja was invited to private residences and for his trouble received a present of from 10 to 100 Rupees.

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5 The treatment accorded to the female worshippers during the four periods of worship at the temples was simply scandalous in that men and women mixed together and the crush was fearful. This gave an opportunity for vicious men to assault the modesty of women with impunity. On extraordinary occasions the crowd was so dense that females were totally denuded of their slight and loose clothing in the crush. The guardians of temples ill-treated on the occasions both male and female worshippers to hasten their passage through the temples; but when these guardians were bribed, this treatment was stopped.

## **Degrading practices followed by the Vaishnava devotees.**

1. The dust on which the Maharajas had walked was eaten by the votaries.

2. Their worship was directed not only to the Maharajas but to their very pictures, to the very wooden shoes, to their 'bethaks' or 'gadis'.

3. Presents of money and precious articles were offered at the feet of the Maharajas with humiliating prostrations.

4. The Maharajas' feet were shampooed. They were decorated with precious ornaments and were frequently bathed by the votaries in saffron and milk.

5. Some females, in their impassioned devotion, dedicated themselves wholly to practising sensual enjoyment; and were so strongly impressed with its beneficial and meritorious efficacy, that they dedicated their daughters to the same service. Often, in the case of the sickness of husband or child, in order to procure their recovery, women had vowed to dedicate their daughters to the embraces of the Maharajas.

6. The most influential and rich members of the sect thought it no degradation to perform the most menial offices in the service of the Maharajas.

7. The Maharajas commanded the services of Vaishnavas at any time they liked, without giving them any remuneration.

8. In the morning, when the Maharaja was at his ablutions, a number of persons collected at a short distance, and as he stood up, to wipe his body, one of the Vaishnavas, approaching him with reverence, took

into a vessel the water dropping from his "potia" (the cloth covering the lower part of his body). This dirty water was esteemed to be of high virtue and distributed among all present at the temple, who drank it with feelings of pride. Some of it was reserved, until the next day, for the purification of absent Vaishnavas.

9. The remnants of the Maharajas' meals were called "Juthan"; these were preserved as very precious stuff, and could be had on a formal application by any Vaishnava who desired to eat them. At private banquets, given with the Maharajas' permission, these remnants were first served, and were eaten as though they were ambrosia.

10. The pan-supari (betel leaves and betel-nuts) which the Maharajas threw out after chewing, was also collected and preserved, to be distributed to males and females who took great pleasure in chewing it over again.

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The influence of the Maharajas over their devotees was so great, that all the descendants of the Maharajas were held from infancy in extreme veneration solely on account of their descent, without any reference to their individual sanctity or learning. The Maharajas were

nurtured in ignorance, indolence, and self-indulgence. Nurtured in sensuality, with the barest smattering of education they became the precocious practitioners of every depravity. Accustomed to delicate nurture, the choicest viands, the richest habiliments, the smiles of women, and the abject servility of men, they naturally became gross sensualists.

### TEN PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES.

The ten principal doctrines of the 'Pushti Marga' as established by Vallabhacharya were as follows:—

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2. To worship Shri Krishna as the only principal means of salvation.
3. To forsake the sense of shame, with reference to the public opinion and the commandments of the Vedas and Shastras, and to be supplicant to the spiritual guide for protection or salvation.
4. Humility towards God and the spiritual guide.
5. To believe that "I am not a man but a Gopi (female cowherd) of Brindawan."
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According to these religious principles, the followers of the 'Pushti Marga' were the only principal Vaishnavas ( worshippers of Vishnu ).

As time went on, these principles were added to, so as to have a complete hold on the bodies, minds and wealth of the followers of the Maharajas. I give below samples of a few :—

(a) Whoever holds the Maharaja and God to be different and distinct shall be Seechana. Vaishnavas should respect the names of their spiritual guides, like God. They should freely hear and relate precepts of the 'Pushti Marga' and firmly believe in them. Gurus or the spiritual guides are the manifest incarnations of the Deity, and their worship should be performed in the same way as the worship of God. In 'Kali Yuga' there is no means of salvation similar to worship. Gurus should be regarded even greater than God, for if God gets angry the Guru is able to save, but if the Guru gets angry there is nobody able to save one from the effects of Guru's displeasure. Worship of God entitles one to go to an inferior heaven; whereas that of Guru to the highest heaven.

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age. Even when the Maharajas were in the sitting room speaking to their followers, if women came there with presents, the Maharajas immediately retired into the bed-room, then accepted the presents and ministered to their lust. Women had been known to part with their personal ornaments to purchase sexual intercourse with the Maharajas; and upon returning home, they used to represent to their husbands, or to the elders of the house, that their ornaments were lost in the crush of the throng while paying adoration to the idols.

7. In the intervals of the official priestly duties of the Maharajas, they had recourse to every variety of amusement and pleasure; and not a few rejoiced exceedingly in displaying indecent pictures to their female devotees, with a view to exciting their passions.

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## HOW THE MAHARAJAS WERE WORSHIPPED

The first duty of the Vaishnavas belonging to the sect of the Maharajas while going to worship the idols was to go to the Maharaja, who was found seated on a couch, and to prostrate themselves at his feet. The worshippers placed their fingers on the feet of the Maharaja, and then applied them to the feet of the idols. Maharajas could be worshipped at all hours except the times when they were busy in the temples.

### Different ways in which Maharajas were worshipped

1. When the temple door was closed, the music was playing upon the musical instruments, and the descriptive of Shri Krishna's 'Gopis'.

2. The Morning "Mangal" was performed at 4 o'clock in the morning; this time gave a chance to communicate with their favourites and devotees at this time.

3. During the festival of their persons in which they specially did to their devotees.

4. In the spring and autumn holidays, the Maharajas and their female devotees. The most important of the Maharajas consisted in throwing votaries small balls of red powder specially aiming at their breasts. On the occasion of the holi festival, it was customary for them to throw from a syringe, yellow water towards worshippers.

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(e) Whoever disobeys the orders of his spiritual guide shall go to dreadful hells, and lose all his religious merits.

(f) Vaishnavas were strictly prohibited from showing to the followers of other sects books containing amorous songs and all other books issued by the Maharajas.

(g) The male and female followers of the Maharajas were forbidden from hearing the teachings of other faiths and from adopting them.

The Maharajas made these principles their creed, and thereby they virtually said to their followers: "God made you ignorant and vile, they made us holy and wise; you are the sheep, we are the shepherds. If you do not obey us here, God will punish you now, and torment you forever. You must not reason. Reason is a rebel. You must not contradict, for contradiction is born of egotism. You must believe." It was by enunciating principles mentioned above that the Maharajas had sown seeds of superstition. Superstition has been ever responsible for "delusions and illusions, dreams and visions, ceremonies and cruelties, faith and fanaticism, beggars and bigots, persecution and prayers, theology and torture, piety and poverty, saints and slaves, miracles and mummeries, disease and death." It was by their creed, that the Maharajas enslaved the minds of men and poisoned the imaginations of children, and filled their minds with fear. With such kinds of spiritual guides, hypocrisy was respectable and candour infamous. They appealed to hopes and fears. They asked no one to think, to investigate. They insisted that all shall believe. With them, credulity was the greatest of virtues, and doubt the deadliest of sins. They loved only the sub-



missive worshippers, the kneelers and the crawlers and not the doubters, the investigators and thinkers. They had thus made temples and their precincts, arsenals of superstition with the result that their followers became mental slaves and traitors to themselves and to their fellowmen and rendered to their Gurus unreasoning obedience. The Maharajas by such crafty means, unbecoming their position of spiritual guides, owned bodies, minds and souls of their ignorant and credulous followers.

### CONSEQUENCES OF BLIND WORSHIP.

The above mentioned creed drew away the followers from the knowledge of the true God. The superstitions introduced by the sect subserved the purpose of controlling the consciences of the devotees, and led them to see God only in their religious guides, and to worship them as incarnations of God. The sect degraded the pure ideal of spiritual reunion with God into the gross reality of carnal copulation with the hereditary high priests. Love for God was likened to the lustful longing of an adulteress for her paramour. Paradise was spoken of as a garden of amorous dalliance. Ordinary devotees made no distinction between Shri Krishna and a Maharaja.

#### ' Ras Mandlis '

The creed favoured the formation of " Ras Mandlis," or " Carnal love meetings." This institution owed its origin to the ancient mythological story ' Ras Leela,' the story of the gopis or female cowherds mixing dancing, and becoming passionately enamoured of Krishna. Husbands wishing to be members of the ' Mandlis ' had compulsorily to make their wives members also. These could also be joined by persons who had no wives or who were not married. ' Mandlis ' met in the evening at the

residence of some orthodox and rich Vaishnav. These meetings were strictly private. At these gatherings, readings from "The tales of the 84 Vaishnavas", and "The tales of 252 Vaishnavas" were given. The sect of the Maharajas considered such readings by their followers to be a part of their religious duty. The real object of them was to excite concupiscence among the hearers. Husbands with their wives, and possibly with their lady acquaintances attended these functions. Sweetmeats brought by members were then offered as gifts to the above named 2 books. And then indiscriminately males and females put sweetmeats bit by bit into each other's mouth with ardent expressions of love. This inflamed the passions of the partakers. They then "blended together in the ecstasy of superlative bliss." Such 'Mandlis' existed in India wherever Vaishnavas dwelt. The Maharajas acted the part of Krishna with ladies who represented Gopis. This was their 'Ras Lila.'

In connection with these practices Karsondas wrote—"It is the fatal result of the gross and indecent religion thus inculcated and practised by the Vallabhacharyas, that females are rendered callous to the moral degradation into which they are betrayed by their religious preceptors. These preceptors imbue their teachings with the idea that all emanates from the highest source of spiritual inspiration, they themselves being absolutely its full impersonation upon earth; and their doctrines impressively inculcating that they are even superior to the Almighty, because, although ostensibly the mere medium of communication between Him and the worshippers, they can save when it is beyond the power of their God, and can grant absolution and ensure pardon to the positive certainty

f their votaries eventually enjoying the delights of paradise. The moral nature of the devotees being thus controlled and subjugated, they succumb slavishly to the infatuation, unconscious of the foul snare into which they fall; and under the supposition that they obtain honour and spiritual exaltation by immoral contact with these incarnations of the Deity, lend themselves willingly to minister to their corrupt pleasures."

#### THREATS AND HOPES.

The sect's religious books contained both threats and hopes; threats of being born as dogs, serpents, apes or asses, after passing from this life; and hopes that the followers shall pass, without any intervening transmigration, direct to Goloka (the residence of Shri Krishna), a place far above the three worlds, and having, at five hundred millions of yojans below it, the separate regions of Vishnu and Shiva. The region of Goloka was indestructible, while all the rest was subject to annihilation. Fears brought about "moral and intellectual paralysis" among the followers whereby they were unable to resist following the debasing practices inculcated in the teaching of the sect. Hopes excited strong desires to give to their spiritual guides valuable presents, and blinded them to the degradation to which they were subjected through the Maharajas' craft and lust.

Karsondas was astounded at the conduct of the followers of the Maharajas and offered the following comments on the same:— "That men who, in the ordinary business of life, and in their daily intercourse with others, are acute and intelligent, quick to perceive their rights and persistent in maintaining them,

nurtured in ignorance, indolence, and self-indulgence. Nurtured in sensuality, with the barest smattering of education they became the precocious practitioners of every depravity. Accustomed to delicate nurture, the choicest viands, the richest habiliments, the smiles of women, and the abject servility of men, they naturally became gross sensualists.

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The ten principal doctrines of the 'Pushti Marga' as established by Vallabhacharya were as follows:—

1. To secure the firm support of the spiritual guide.
2. To worship Shri Krishna as the only principal means of salvation.
3. To forsake the sense of shame, with reference to the public opinion and the commandments of the Vedas and Shastras, and to be supplicant to the spiritual guide for protection or salvation.
4. Humility towards God and the spiritual guide.
5. To believe that "I am not a man but a Gopi (female cowherd) of Brindawan."
6. To sing or praise always the virtues of the Goswami or the Maharaja.
8. To obey the commands of the spiritual guide.
9. To believe without questioning what Goswami or Maharaja may do or say.
10. The association with and the service of the Vaishnavas.

According to these religious principles, the followers of the 'Pushti Marga' were the only principal Vaishnavas ( worshippers of Vishnu ).

As time went on, these principles were added to, so as to have a complete hold on the bodies, minds and wealth of the followers of the Maharajas I give below samples of a few :—

(a) Whoever holds the Maharaja and God to be different and distinct shall be Seechana. Vaishnavas should respect the names of their spiritual guides, like God. They should freely hear and relate precepts of the 'Pushti Marga' and firmly believe in them. Gurus or the spiritual guides are the manifest incarnations of the Deity, and their worship should be performed in the same way as the worship of God. In 'Kali Yuga' there is no means of salvation similar to worship. Gurus should be regarded even greater than God, for if God gets angry the Guru is able to save, but if the Guru gets angry there is nobody able to save one from the effects of Guru's displeasure. Worship of God entitles one to go to an inferior heaven; whereas that of Guru to the highest heaven.

(b) Whoever divulges the secrets of the Maharajas shall for three births be born a dog.

(c) Whoever without paying his respect to his Guru performs his worship shall lose the merit for his devotion.

(d) Vaishnavas should take a vow to serve, Maharajas with their "tan, man and dhan" at the time of 'samarpana' (the first form of adjuration the sect demands). 'Tan' implied the body in all its relations; 'man' was the mind with all its faculties and qualities; and 'dhan' signified placing at the Guru's disposal sons, wives, daughters, and everything else before applying them to their own use. Offerings enjoyed by Vaishnavas were not acceptable to their Gurus; therefore all offerings should be made to them in the first instance.

residence of some orthodox and rich Vaishnav. These meetings were strictly private. At these gatherings, readings from "The tales of the 84 Vaishnavas", and "The tales of 252 Vaishnavas" were given. The sect of the Maharajas considered such readings by their followers to be a part of their religious duty. The real object of them was to excite concupiscence among the hearers. Husbands with their wives, and possibly with their lady acquaintances attended these functions. Sweetmeats brought by members were then offered as gifts to the above named 2 books. And then indiscriminately males and females put sweetmeats bit by bit into each other's mouth with ardent expressions of love. This inflamed the passions of the partakers. They then "blended together in the ecstasy of superlative bliss." Such 'Mandlis' existed in India wherever Vaishnavas dwelt. The Maharajas acted the part of Krishna with ladies who represented Gopis. This was their 'Ras Lila.'

In connection with these practices Karsondas wrote—"It is the fatal result of the gross and indecent religion thus inculcated and practised by the Vallabhacharyas, that females are rendered callous to the moral degradation into which they are betrayed by their religious preceptors. These preceptors imbue their teachings with the idea that all emanates from the highest source of spiritual inspiration, they themselves being absolutely its full impersonation upon earth and their doctrines impressively inculcating that they are even superior to the Almighty, because although ostensibly the mere medium of communication between Him and the worshippers, they can save when it is beyond the power of their God, and can grant absolution and ensure pardon to the positive certainty

of their votaries eventually enjoying the delights of paradise. The moral nature of the devotees being thus controlled and subjugated, they succumb slavishly to the infatuation, unconscious of the foul snare into which they fall; and under the supposition that they obtain honour and spiritual exaltation by immoral contact with these incarnations of the Deity, lend themselves willingly to minister to their corrupt pleasures."

#### THREATS AND HOPES.

The sect's religious books contained both threats and hopes; threats of being born as dogs, serpents, apes or asses, after passing from this life; and hopes that the followers shall pass, without any intervening transmigration, direct to Goloka (the residence of Shri Krishna), a place far above the three worlds, and having, at five hundred millions of yojans below it, the separate regions of Vishnu and Shiva. The region of Goloka was indestructible, while all the rest was subject to annihilation. Fears brought about "moral and intellectual paralysis" among the followers whereby they were unable to resist following the debasing practices inculcated in the teaching of the sect. Hopes excited strong desires to give to their spiritual guides valuable presents, and blinded them to the degradation to which they were subjected through the Maharajas' craft and lust.

Karsondas was astounded at the conduct of the followers of the Maharajas and offered the following comments on the same:— "That men who, in the ordinary business of life, and in their daily intercourse with others, are acute and intelligent, quick to perceive their rights and persistent in maintaining them,

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should submit to be the victims and the dupes of these priests, and should adopt and allow the vile practices they have introduced, is a mystery which we are unable to solve, except by a reference to the power of superstition to enthral the mind. Were the Maharajas as the Jesuits were, an intellectual and highly educated class, we might conceive of such a subjection to them; but the instances of culture among these men are so extremely rare, and their spiritual ascendancy is so entirely maintained as a hereditary right, without any respect to their character or qualifications for the sacerdotal office, that there is nothing by which we can account for the influence they exercise." Karsondas was able to account for the female devotees submitting, because, though possessing normally a keener perception of right and wrong than men, their intelligence was enfeebled by want of education and enlightened society. They lived in an atmosphere which early developed the passions and which was unfavourable to purity and delicacy. Hence superstitions had more baneful effect on them. Karsondas accounted for the utter submission of the followers of the Maharaj as to exorbitant demands as follows:—"The person who has incurred the displeasure of Maharaja has no alternative but to endure all the pains and penalties of excommunication, or to make the most abject submission, and atone by the offer of costly bribes. Any one who resists the imposition of a tax which the Maharaja desires to levy is punished in a lighter way, although one equally powerful in its consequences, for he is prohibited from worshipping the image or the Maharaja, until he submit. It thus happens that even the rich and

influential are often kept soliciting pardon, and fasting at the door of the dwelling of the Maharaja, for they can not take even food or water until they have paid their adoration to the image and to the Maharaja which they are not permitted to do until they have submitted to the imposition."

Long before Karsondas was born, the immoral practices of the Maharajas were known and commented upon by several distinguished writers and poets. A Brahmin named Damodar Swami, a dramatic writer, had composed a Sanskrit Drama called "Pakhund Dharma Chhedak Natak" or "The Drama for Smashing the Heretical Religion" in 1639 A. D. This drama, in the opinion of Dr. J. Wilson, was a faithful mirror of the doctrines and practices of the sect as they prevailed in those days as well as in Karsondas's times. The conductor of the play says to one of the actors:—"The Vedas have fled; lovely damsels now look to the gratification of sense with the descendants of Vallabh; the descendant of Vallabh is the kisser of females; he feels lust at every step for his large-eyed damsele. Offering one's self and one's wives and daughters to the Gurus is in this world the only course of salvation. Carnal intercourse with females, dining and playing with them, is one of the principal offices of Krishna. The nectarine pleasure of Shree Gokul (Krishna) is better than thousand other expedients. If copulation does not take place with Krishna, the existence of the paramour of man is worse than that of a worm." Karsondas got this work published in Gujarati, after his victory in the Libel Case. Well-known poets, like Samal Bhatt, and Akho Bhagat and Krishnaram exposed in their writings the immoralities of the Maharajas. In the

year 1820, Capt. McMurdo, British Political Resident at Cutch wrote: "Such is the veneration in which a Maharaja is held, that the most respectable families consider themselves honoured by his cohabiting with their wives or daughters." Munshi Shilal Sheikh wrote among other things: "Men and women are so firm in their good faith, that when they marry, they first send their wives to the spiritual guide without having made use of them. Should any of the disciples hesitate to send his wife as mentioned above, she becomes agreeably to their belief, a barren woman, and her husband will not benefit by her."

In 1855, the Bhattias being very angry at the number of instances of the defilement of women of their sect by the Maharajas at their temples where they used to go for worshipping the deities, convened a meeting and resolved there, that for the future, none of their wives or daughters after they had come of age, should be ever allowed to resort to the temples of the Maharajas or to the Maharajas for worship except at and during certain stated hours in the morning when the Maharajas were engaged in performing ceremonies. They also resolved that as the authority which the Maharajas were exercising over them was often improper and injurious and thereby their money was unnecessarily wasted and injury was occasioned to their reputation for intelligence, they should, as far as practicable, avoid taking the opinions of the Maharajas on any matter.

#### FUTILE EFFORTS TO REFORM MAHARAJAS.

A few years before the Maharaja Libel case, Hindu reformers had tried to persuade the Maharajas to desist from their evil ways but the hydra-headed monster of

adultery was neither controlled nor killed. This appeared from the quotations I give below from the evidence recorded in the Libel Case.

Mathooradas Lowjee said: "Eventually the Maharajas refused to accede to my request not to admit females into the temples except at certain hours. The refusal was made after some discussion. I am unwilling to reveal what private conversation I had with Jeewanjee unless forced to give it out. Jeewanjee said all persons are masters of their own houses, and adultery has increased very much, and it is difficult to stop it. He could not, he said, remonstrate with his elders or with those who were superior to him. If he attempted to remonstrate, he was afraid the other Maharajas would not mind him; and he, therefore, suggested that I should secure the aid of Shree Nathji and Muttreshjiwalla Maharajas. Without their co-operation, he said, nothing could be effected. As the females were the source of great income to the Maharajas, it was rather a very serious matter, he said, to stop the source of income, and thus deprive them of the means of defraying their expenses. He added that, like an opium-eater, a man could not give up the practice of lust and therefore it was not possible to put a stop at once to the practices of the Maharajas. He advised me to have patience in the matter of this desirable reform. I had similar conversation with Jeevanjee on another occasion."

Lakhmidas Khimjee said: "Dr. Bhau, Vinayakrao Vasudeo, and, if I mistake not, Narayan Dinanathji, were there. Dr. Bhau said to the Maharaja, "Reform your conduct, be pious, establish schools, preach to your followers, etc., and none dare publish anything

against you." It was a long lecture that Dr. Bhau gave. I merely give the substance. Jeevanjee said he would not be able to control the acts of the other Maharajas; as their principal income was derived from females. Cursetjee Cama, who was present on the occasion, said a great deal to Jeevanjee Maharaj. The Maharaj said, "As regards myself, I am ready to give my signature to any arrangements; I will now leave off such practices." He offered but did not give his signature."

Mangaldas Nathoobhoy said: "I was present on one occasion with others at the house of Jeevanjee Maharaj. Dr. Bhau opened the conversation on the subject of the adulteries of the Maharajas. Jeevanjee said he was unable to control the conduct and practices of all the other Maharajas. He expressed a wish to do all he could. Dr. Bhau remarked that, if they adopted a virtuous course of conduct, none dare lisp anything against them. At a private conversation with Jeevanjee he was informed that it was impossible to put a stop at once to the practices of the Maharajas: their chief income was derived from females, and they could not be prevented from visiting the Maharajas, etc."

Among all parts of India, where the Maharajas had their sway, the state of things in Bombay had grown to an unbearable extent. People were thoroughly disgusted with the licentiousness of the Maharajas, but there was nobody forthcoming to voice the pent-up feelings and to publicly agitate in all possible ways so as to strike at the very foundation of the sect of the Maharajas. The psychological moment arrived. There arose a bitter controversy between the Bhuleshwar Brahmins on the one hand, and the Bombay Maharajas on the other. The Brahmins rightly or wrongly partook of the food offered

to their god Shiva; the Maharajas remonstrated and considered this act of the Brahmins to be sacrilegious. They on their part commanded their votaries that until the Brahmins repented, they should neither give them alms nor give any encouragement to them. The religious view which the Maharajas entertained about partaking of food offered to Shiva was right according to the Shastras and the custom, but it did not appear that this time they were actuated by this noble motive. The real object of taking this move was merely to strike at the root of the Shiva worship so as to remove from the field their rival Brahmins and to make their own supremacy over their votaries stronger than before. A bold leader was required from the very orthodox fold to come out to take up the public cause and make it his very own. Karsondas was much needed at this time. He started a cheap weekly paper called "Satya Prakash" or the Light of Truth. The times when this Paper was started were the most propitious. Karsondas was not a discoverer. The most that he said in his Paper against the Maharajas was waiting to be said. Under the British regime educated Indians like Karsondas had dug up the golden treasures from the mine of knowledge. People's moral sense had outgrown its childhood. Reason was rejoicing as a strong man to run a race but no one dared. Thousands of Vaishnavas who were fully cognisant of the immoralities practised by the Maharajas were very much afraid that if they spoke their honest convictions, they would be excommunicated and they would have to meet the awful wrath of their spiritual guides. Then came the young Baniya reformer who was hardly twenty-three years of age from the very fold of the Vaishnav votaries, one who was initiated from his very

infancy in the Vaishnava sect. He had, from his young age, with his own eyes, seen the indecencies of the Maharajas, had heard about their general bad reputation, and therefore had ceased to visit their temples. He believed the Maharajas were entitled as spiritual guides in the proper sense, but did not recognise them either as gods or as incarnations of God. He as the mouthpiece of 50 Baniyas and 150 Bhattiays and several reformers of other communities gave the most powerful and the most reasoned expression to the great protest that was already in the heart of a number of intelligent people. Karsondas's Paper made the Maharajas shake with fear, They were non-plussed. The reformers had struck iron while it was hot. Light filled the firmament. Day had dawned. There was no other course for the Maharajas but to manage the critical situation tactfully. An ingenious plan suggested itself to them. They told their votaries that they had not the slightest objection to redress the grievances, but desired that the amicable arrangement arrived at between them should not be put into force for a year more. The band of reformers knowing their numerical weakness, thought it wise to agree to this plan. The Vaishnavas, believing that the Maharajas had the genuine desire to redress their grievances agreed to act towards the Brahmins as desired by the Maharajas; but even at that time, among the Vaishnavas there was a prominent Kapole Baniya, Mr. Gopaldas Madhavdas, the Headman of the Baniya Mahajan, owing allegiance to the Maharajas, who declined to obey the wishes of his spiritual guides. Nobody dared to excommunicate him either from his caste or from the Mahajan, because he was the head of the community and the most influential and rich



man. Two other Hindu gentlemen, Messrs. Ramlal Thakersidas and Sakhrum Luxmonji, who did not belong to the Vaishnava sect helped the Brahmins most. The result of this open defiance of the orders of the Maharajas nullified the clauses of the pact. Vaishnavas helped the Brahmins as usual and the pact became a dead letter. Thus the Maharajas failed to achieve their object. They then had recourse to another mean stratagem. The Brahmins had invited the Maharajas to have an open religious discussion with them so as to determine which party was right. The Maharajas did not attend the function. They bribed a poor Brahmin and asked him to attend a special meeting convened by themselves and to tender there a public apology on behalf of the whole Brahmin community. In the public meeting called by the Maharajas, this Brahmin came and acted his part as directed. The trick was found out and the Maharajas became the target of public ridicule in the Press. Thus the Maharajas, the Reformers and the orthodox Vaishnavas, each party in their turn, thought of checkmating one another but none succeeded completely. For the time being, this solution pacified the situation: but all the same important results ensued from this great controversy. Karsondas and his paper Satya Prakash became very prominent. This reminds us of the patent fact in history that God chooses insignificant instruments to accomplish mighty results. Martin Luther, the poor peasant boy, born in obscurity, the son of a miner, eating the scanty bread of poverty, and dwelling with the lowly, was chosen by God to accomplish the greatest religious reformation the world had seen since the days of St Paul. Similarly, in India, to bring about the pioneer work of

exposing the flagrant indecencies and immoralities of the Maharajas, God chose one of the young, poor, obscure Vaishnava of a weak constitution, who was a member of the naturally mild Baniya community and not learned enough for effecting the preliminary reform of changing the mentality of the whole Vaishnava world by exposing the Maharajas in all parts of the world. The account here narrated will show how Karsondas wonderfully succeeded in achieving his special mission.

After the abatement of the controversy between the Brahmins and the Maharajas, Karsondas did not keep quiet. In the 'Satya Prakash' of January 25th, 1857, he put in an advertisement offering a prize for the best essay on the subject of "What ought to be the ideal moral relation between spiritual guides and their votaries, specially female ones?" Karsondas continued in his humble but spirited fashion public agitation on the subject of the Maharajas' objectionable conduct. The Maharajas were afraid of the exposure by one of their followers; hence they tried by all fair and foul means in their power to silence this intrepid reformer; but they had failed to appreciate the nature of the iconoclast they had to deal with. The essay of the poet Narmadashunker was considered to be the best for the prize. Karsondas arranged to have it published. This prize essay was a bolt from the blue to the Maharajas. The Maharajas saw their weaknesses. At this time, if they had been wisely advised, they would have carried out reforms sought after by their followers and pacified their dissatisfied votaries; but relying on the strength of the number of their votaries many of whom were millionaires, that beneficent plan was discarded and they thought it proper to continue in their unrighteous path. They com-

mitted errors after errors, and by their own deeds, they became the divine instruments of their own downfall.

### THREAT OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

In 1858, Jeevanlalji filed a civil suit against one Dayal Motiram and urged the Court not to compel him (Jeevanlalji) to be present in person in the Court. The request was not granted by the judges of the High Court. The press got one more opportunity of criticizing the Maharajas' conduct. The Maharajas did not know what to do. Again they thought of playing a trick. A vernacular newspaper named "Chabook," a paper of repute, was contributing its own mite to spread among its readers, sane thoughts of necessary reforms in various directions. The Maharajas bribed the editor of this paper and he turned a traitor and made his paper a vehicle for abusing the reformers. In the three issues of the paper viz: 17th, 24th September and 3rd October, the reformers were abused and defamed by name. One of these, Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji, filed a suit for defamation against the Editor. The Editor being a poor man had no money to pay advances to his lawyers. He saw his folly. Some one suggested that to mend matters he should subpoena the Maharajas. This plan he approved. The Maharajas were subpoenaed. To avoid service of summons, the Maharajas closed their temples. Consternation spread among the Vaishnavas and their wives, because without offering worship to the idols in the temples they could not take food. Orthodox male and female devotees of the Maharajas showered volleys of abuses on the reformers. The Vaishnavas in a body entreated the Maharajas to open the temples but the

Maharajas declined to do so unless the Vaishnavas signed a document wherein it was stated :

(a) That no Vaishnava should serve the Maharajas with summons to appear in a court of justice ;

(b) That a fund should be raised for the purpose of trying to get an act passed in the Legislative Council by which no Maharaja could be summoned before a court of justice ;

(c) And if during the interval, a Maharaja was served with a summons by an outside party, the Vaishnavas should undergo any expense to put a stop to it;

(d) If any Vaishnava wrote against the Maharajas, he should be punished by his caste people.

#### THE CRUCIAL TEST.

The last clause of this document was really meant to be applied to young Karsondas. Karsondas knew that excommunication meant and what great hardship it would involve. He knew the timidity of several reformer friends of his. Some friends advised him to wait for a better opportunity; others said that this was the opportune moment to act; but no one among his friends was prepared to remain out of caste. Karsondas was the only member of his community who was of an independent turn of mind. In Karsondas's career thus occurred a signal moment which became the landmark of his life. All these years, he was so trained that habit had established an instinct of his mind, which when a sudden demand was made upon it, at a particular moment, might be in a position to meet it in the most suitable way, and utilize it to the utmost extent. The real problem of living was how to take what the hour

brought. He who did this lived nobly and faithfully, and fulfilled God's plan for his life. The difference in men was not in the opportunities that came to them, because opportunities come to all, but in the use of those opportunities. When other men saw nothing, a far-sighted man prepared by his previous life, saw a battle to fight, a duty to perform, a service to render, and an honour to win. Once to every man and nation comes a crucial moment to decide the side which should be taken in the strife of Truth with Falsehood. There were men, who did not know what to choose, when two diametrically opposed plans presented themselves before them. Such people were "ciphers of humanity, who need some true man to stand before them to give them value; neuters in the hive, whose worth is only negative; human clay, for others to knead, and bake, and build into fortune." Karsondas was not a cipher of humanity. A critical moment had arrived in his life, and on the right decision depended the mighty issue of the success or the failure of his life. If he remained the dumb auditor of the shameful story of the deeds of wickedness of the Maharajas, he was not honest and resolute, in expressing his disgust and disapproval, and doing this was condoning what no virtuous man would condone. If he remained silent, in the circumstances in which he was placed, he would be dubbed as an accomplice of sin and for him was lost the grand opportunity of eradicating immorality from the sect toward which he had sacred duties to perform. He deeply thought over the course he should pursue. His mission was, that having chosen the right path himself, he should keep his brother and sister Vaishnavas in the same path. The right time for speaking had come, and what had to be said, should not

be left unsaid, was the right decision to which he arrived after devoting most anxious thought to the matter. He made the right choice in favour of Truth. The Vaishnavas were eagerly and anxiously awaiting the turn Karsondas was taking in the next issue of the 'Satya Prakash.' Karsondas having decided finally in favour of exposing fearlessly the folly of the Maharajas, wrote a stirring article exposing each and every article of the document which he characteristically styled as "The Slavery Bond". The Press again utilised the opportunity of ventilating the popular grievances against the Maharajas. In the "Satya Prakash" too, Karsondas gave an advertisement calling for two prize essays, one on the 'Slavery Bond' and the other on 'The Authority of Maharajas.' The result of this intense agitation was that again the Maharajas were foiled in their attempt to silence Karsondas.

The Kapole caste to which Karsondas belonged, being afraid of the legal steps that might be taken against them, did not think it wise to excommunicate Karsondas. Thus the main clause of the Slavery Bond having proved ineffective, the signatories did not carry out in practice the other terms of the Bond also. The Editor of "Chabook" met with an ignominious defeat in the suit brought against him. All those who had promised help left him in the lurch, and the poor Editor was disgraced in the estimation of the public. He came to grief, was utterly ruined and Providence meted out right punishment to him. The Maharajas found themselves worsted on all sides.

Jadunathji Maharaj was an intelligent Maharaj and usually resided at Surat. He had founded there a Girls' School. When he came to Bombay, the 'Satya

Prakash' gave him a good reception. The reformers requested this Maharaja to preside at the prize distribution ceremony of the Mangaldas Nathoobhoy Girls' School. The Maharaja agreed, and, the whole function passed off well. While Jadunathji was in Bombay, Karsondas's friend, the Brahmin poet Narmadashanker Lalshanker, offered a challenge to the Maharaja saying that he was prepared to prove that Hindu Shastras authorized the remarriage of widows. Jadunathji accepted the challenge. He deeply thought over the matter, and being a clever man hit upon a novel device. When Narmadashanker attended the public meeting with his friend Karsondas and other reformers, Jadunathji asked Narmadashanker as to whether he believed the Hindu Shastras to be revealed or not. Narmadashanker, failing to notice Jadunathji's trick, answered that some Shastras were revealed and others not. Jadunathji thereupon asserted that the reformers had no faith at all in their religion and were atheists. The orthodox people, not appreciating the fine distinction made by Narmadashanker in his arguments, believed in the Maharaja's version. This hasty step of Narmadashanker made Karsondas's work in the Libel case more arduous. The meeting terminated abruptly; but Karsondas did not leave matters at this stage. In the 'Satya Prakash' he commenced to enlighten the public on the correct view to be taken as regards the revealed nature of the Shastras. Jadunathji, on his part, started a serial book called "Swadharm Vardhak and Sanshaya Chhedak" or "The Propagator of Religion and the Annihilator of Doubt." In this the original controversy was dropped and Jadunathji challenged Karsondas to a controversy on the subject of Religion and ridiculed Karsondas's view. On 29th

September, 1860, in the "Chabook", Jadunathji's secretary invited Karsondas to carry on the controversy. At the end of the first month, Jadunathji had his lecture printed in his periodical and threw out a direct open challenge to Karsondas to answer by quoting Shastras. Karsondas accepted the challenge, and reviewed the Maharaja's lecture, whereupon Jadunathji resorted to aggressive measures, prohibited the Vaishnavas from subscribing to the "Satya Prakash", and desired Karsondas to be excommunicated from his caste for the way in which he had reviewed his lecture.

#### AN OUTSPOKEN REVIEW.

The review of Jadunathji's lecture was made by Karsondas in the issue of the "Satya Prakash" of 21st October 1860 under the heading "The Original Religion of the Hindus and the Present Heterodox Opinions." I give below the whole of this memorable review, because it was the subject matter of the celebrated Maharaja Libel Case and because of this famous article, Karsondas's name has become well-known throughout India:—

"The Original Religion of the Hindus and the Present Heterodox Opinions."

In the Puranas and other Shastras of the Hindus, it is stated that in the Kaliyug there will arise false religions and heresies, and impostors and heretics will cause adverse persuasions and adverse religious systems to be established. According to the Hindu Shastras five thousand years have now passed away since the commencement of the Kaliyug. From the Hindu Shastras themselves it is demonstrated that during this period of five thousand years as many new persuasions and religi-



ous systems as have arisen among the Hindus, should all be considered spurious religions or heresies. Now, four hundred years have not as yet elapsed since the birth of Vallabh, the progenitor of the Maharajas. In the books of the Vaishnava persuasion it is written that the birth of Vallabhacharya took place on the 11th of Vaisakh Vud of Samvant 1535, the day of the week being Sunday; since this event 381 years have elapsed and since the beginning of the Kaliyug five thousand years have passed. The sect of Vallabhacharya, then, it is clear, originated within the Kaliyug itself. In the same way as the followers of Dadu, the followers of Sadhu, the Ram-snehi, the Ramanandi, the Shejanandi and other sects arose; so the sect of Vallabhacharya arose. All these sects have arisen in the Kaliyug, therefore, according to the declarations of the Hindu Shastras, they must be heterodox.

Jadunathji Maharaj says that in the same way as some one goes from the gates of the Fort to proceed to Walkeshwar and some one to Byculla, so exactly the original courses of the Vedas and the Puranas having gone forward, have diverged into different ways. What a deceitful proposition this is. Out of one religious system ten or fifteen byways must not branch off. The course of religion and of morals must be one only. What necessity is there to quit the straight road by which to go to Walkeshwar and take the circuitous route of Byculla? Each sectary has made every other sectary a heretic, and one has scattered dust upon the other; what then is the necessity for acting thus? But we have already made known that as regards the weapons with which the Maharaj has come forth to defend himself, those very weapons will oppose the Maharaj, and annoy him. The

Maharaj considers the Hindu Shastras as the work of God; he cannot then assert that any particular statement of the Hindu Shastras is false. The said Maharaj cannot allege that the statement that in the Kaliyug heretical opinions will arise is false. Then like several other sects, the sect of the Maharajas has arisen in the Kaliyug, consequently it is established by the Hindu Shastras that it is a false and heretical one. The sect of the Maharajas is heretical and one delusive to simple people; that is proved by the genuine books of the Vedas, the Puranas, etc., according to what is intimated above. Not only this, but also from the works composed by the Maharajas, it is proved that the Maharajas have raised up nothing but a new heresy and disorder. Behold with regard to the subject of Brahm how Gokulnathji has amplified the original stanza, and what commentary he has made thereon:—

Translation of the original in Sanskrit:—

“Consequently before he himself has enjoyed her, he should make over his own married wife (to the Maharaj), and he should also make over (to him) his son and daughters. After having got married, he should before having himself enjoyed his wife make an offering of her (to the Maharaj); after which he should apply her to his own use.”

Alas! What a heresy this is, what a shame this is, and what a delusion this is! We ask Jadunathji Maharaj in what Veda, in what Purana, in what Shashtra, and in what law book it is written that one's married wife should be made over to a Maharaj or to a religious preceptor before being enjoyed. Not only one's wife, but one's daughter also is to be made over! Alas! in writing this, our pen

will not move on. We are seized with utter disgust and agitation. To render blind people who can see with their eyes and to throw dust in their eyes, and in the name of religion and under the pretence of religion to enjoy their tender maidens, wives and daughters, than this what greater heresy and what greater deceit? In the Kaliyug many other heresies and many sects have arisen besides that of Vallabhacharya, but no other sectaries have ever perpetuated such shamelessness, subtlety, immodesty, rascality, and deceit as has the sect of the Maharajas. When we use such severe terms as these, our simple Hindu friends are wroth with us, and in consequence of that wrath of theirs, we have had and have much to endure. But when throwing dust in the eyes of simple people, the Maharajas write in their books about enjoying the tender maidens—the disciples' wives and daughters—and they enjoy them accordingly, great flames spring up within our inside, our pen at once becomes heated on fire, and we have to grieve over our Hindu friends and over their weak powers of reflection.

Jadunathji Maharaj has commenced issuing a small work styled "The Propagator of our own Religion"; we ask him: In what way do you wish to effect the propagation of religion? Your ancestors having scattered dust in the eyes of simple people, made them blind. Do you wish to make them see, or taking a false pride in the upholding of your religion, do you wish to delude simple people still more? Jadunathji Maharaj, should you wish to propagate or to spread abroad religion, then do you personally adopt a virtuous course of conduct and admonish your other Maharajas. As long as the preceptors of religion shall themselves appear to be immersed in the sea of licentiousness so long they shall

not be competent to convey religious exhortations. Gokulnathji having composed the commentary above-mentioned, has attached to your Vaishnava persuasion a great blot of ink. Let that be first removed. Scorn the writer of the commentary. (Oh, you) Maharajas, acting up to that commentary, defile the wives and daughters of your devotees. Desist from that and destroy at once immorality such as that of the Company at the Ras Festival. As long as you shall not do so you cannot give religious admonition, and propagate your own religious faith. Do you be pleased to be assured of that."

Sir Matthew Sausse divides this article under the following four heads:—

1stly. So far as it characterizes the sect of Vallabhacharya, as heretical in respect of the ancient Hindu Religion.

2ndly. As it attributes to the Maharajas as the spiritual heads of the sect, the inculcation of heretical and immoral doctrines.

3rdly. As it charges the Maharajas as a body with immoral practices under the pretence of Religion.

4thly. So far as it charges the plaintiff individually with the practice of immorality with the females of his sect.

Karsondas continued the religious controversy with Jadunathji even after this article; but on 18th November 1860 the controversy with the Plaintiff ceased. In April, after the elapse of full six months, a Notice was sent to Karsondas, on behalf of Jadunathji, to retract his statements. In the 'Satya Prakash' of 5th May Karsondas

replied that he saw nothing to alter or retract in what he had written, and nothing to apologize for, as required by Jadunathji. This reply, coupled with the fact that a portion of the Vaishnavas had commenced to raise their voice of protest, drove Jadunathji to take thorough revenge upon Karsondas, because it was solely due to his efforts, that the Vaishnava public had arisen from their lethergy. Thus the Maharajas committed a grave blunder, but looking from the point of our civilisation, it was a step which was to result in great healthy changes in the moral condition of the Hindu society.

#### JADUNATHJI'S LIBEL SUIT.

Jadunathji filed an action of libel both against Karsondas as Editor, and Nanabhai Rustomji Ranina as the publisher of the 'Satya Prakash.' In the Complaint, Jadunathji, as the Plaintiff, complained that the several charges, mentioned in the above-named four divisions, were false and malicious and that they had been published, and they injuriously affected him, in his individual character as a member of society at large, in his religious character and conduct as a Brahmin, as a Maharaj, as a Hindu high priest and as a member of the sect of Vallabhacharya, and claimed damages of Rs. 50 000 for the injury done to him in these several characters which he claimed to fill. Karsondas, the Defendant, pleaded several pleas, chief among these being that of not guilty; that the article was not libellous; and that what was stated in the article, being true, was justified.

Before the case came for hearing on 25th January 1862, several important events happened, and these, having a bearing on the case have to be dealt with at this stage. On 6th September, 1861, the leading men

of the Bhattia community convened a meeting of their caste, and there resolved that none of the caste should give evidence against the Maharaj, and they also further resolved that, whoever did so should be subjected to the pains and penalties of excommunication by his caste. On this day, handbills, dated 4th September 1861, were distributed among those present, requesting that the documents containing the resolutions passed by the meeting of the Bhattias in 1855, and now with the leading Shettias, should not be handed over to the Reformers. As this resolution was illegal, and as in the Libel Case, it was most natural for him, to secure Bhattia witnesses, Karsondas, as the Editor of the 'Satya Prakash' charged nine prominent Bhattias who took a leading part in effecting the above resolution, with conspiracy for obstructing and impeding the course of public justice, in the Fort Police Court, before Mr. W. Crawford, Senior Magistrate, on 11th September, 1861. On this day, nearly 3000 Bhattias were present both inside and outside the Police Court. As Karsondas was leaving the Court compound, he was severely assaulted, although he had given no cause for this treatment meted out to him by the orthodox people. Karsondas had to seek Police protection in order to save his life. The Magistrate committed the Case to the Sessions. The trial of the Bhattia Conspiracy Case commenced on 12th December 1861, at the Fourth Annual Sessions of 1861, before Sir Joseph Arnould, Kt., and lasted till 14th December and was heard before a Full Court on 17th December. Messrs. Anstey and Dunbar appeared for Karsondas. Mr. Anstey asked for mercy being shown to the accused, on behalf of his client Karsondas. The Judge did not sentence the accused to rigorous impri-

sonment, although that was what was provided in the law, but fined Gokuldas Liladhar and Lakhmidas Damji each to pay a fine of Rs. 1,000 and the seven other defendants, each a fine of Rs. 500. Karsondas had to incur costs amounting to Rs. 4,000; and the Court ordered Rs. 1,000 to be given to him out of the Fine Fund.

Before I deal with the great trial, it is necessary to mention the strength of the orthodox and the reform parties. The Plaintiff himself was not a man of good character. He and his followers were ignorant of the ways of the Courts. He had on his side a very large number of followers, some of whom would have liked to remain aloof, if the reformers had not earned the bad reputation of being disbelievers in religion. On Karsondas's side, the greatest strength lay in his being thoroughly pure; his plea was just and was of a kind as to be thoroughly justified by the character of the Maharajas themselves. He was acquainted with the ways of the law Courts. Being a reformer, he had every likelihood of being helped by the Court; but he and his band of reformers had the great disadvantage of being few in numbers and lacking in the sinews of war; but these drawbacks were compensated by the unity that prevailed among themselves at this time and by the support of some rich persons in their camp.

Karsondas was helped in the prosecution of this case by several persons of different communities; he acted as their mouthpiece. He was only 28 years old, and did not command as much influence as the Maharajas; he had a few staunch friends, but many others were of a timid nature, yet among the band of reformers who were thinkers, his white soul had seen something which he

alone was able to tell in a plain way. Ruskin says "Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think; but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophesy and religion, all in one." It was for special reasons that he was selected as the mouthpiece of the whole circle.

The trial of the Libel Case in the Supreme Court (Plea Side) was before a Full Court consisting of the Chief Justice Sir Mathew Sausse and Sir Joseph Arnould. Mr. Bayley and Mr. Scoble were the Counsel who appeared for the Plaintiff; while Mr. Anstey, with Mr. Dunbar appeared for the Defendant. The case commenced on 25th January 1862 and ended on 4th March. For the Plaintiff, 31 witnesses were examined; and for the Defendant 33. In the words of the Chief Justice: "The case was contested with all the obstinacy and acrimony which generally characterize caste and religious disputes, when they unfortunately force themselves into a Court of Law". The Judges took a month and eighteen days to consider their decision. On 22nd April, the Chief Justice gave judgment in favour of the Plaintiff upon the plea of the general issue. As to the minor pleas, 2nd, 4th and 6th, a verdict was entered for the Plaintiff; the verdict on the minor pleas, 3rd and 5th, was in favour of the Defendant. The verdict on the most important two pleas, seventh and eighth, being pleas of justification, was also in favour of the Defendant. Sir Joseph Arnould differed from the Chief Justice and said that the article complained of was no libel and therefore his opinion on the first issue, was in favour of the Defendant. He agreed with the decision of the Chief Justice as regards minor pleas. On the great issue about the pleas of justification, both



judges agreed. Sir Joseph Arnould gave a very learned judgment and justified in all ways the Defendant Karsondas in such a cogent and reasoned manner, that the Bombay Gazette of 22nd April 1862 characterized it as "one of the most eloquent, powerful, and just judgment ever delivered from the Bench of the Supreme Court in Bombay." Karsondas's biographer Rao Saheb Mahipatram says that Indians should ever honour and remember the name of Sir Joseph Arnould with love and affection because of the noble sentiments expressed in his judgment, which were more valuable than gold and more precious than diamonds.

One of the journals, of those times, after comparing both judgments, justly said:—Had we not Sir Joseph Arnould's able judgment to accompany Sir Mathew's side by side, correcting at every step the insidious effects which the latter might have wrought, we should have anticipated evils too great to be estimated to their full extent."

Both English and Vernacular Press praised Karsondas for his moral victory. I give here a few important specimens:—

*The Indian Banner*: "There is a pleasure to watch the triumph of truth and progress in this world of probation.....Karsondas is triumphant; his cause is triumphant; and we think not so much of it as interesting as the moral effects which that triumph is calculated to produce upon the minds of his ignorant fellow-countrymen."

*The Bamdad or Dawn*: "He made up his mind to go on with the case at all risks, and his consistency and perseverance have been rewarded. The cause of

truth has at last prevailed, a most degrading superstition is exploded, the teachers and propagators of this superstition are in the estimation of enlightened men cast down to the lowest depths from that proud, high position which they enjoyed for three hundred years, and the way of reformation thrown open. Mr. Karsondas Mulji has the honour of being the chief instrument in bringing about these results. His name will descend to posterity as that of a brave, genuine reformer. It will ever be associated with the cause of reformation in this country."

The *Bombay Gazette* called Karsondas "a public benefactor" and offered the following comments: "In the exposure that has been made, every intelligent person must be struck with the temperate, judicious, and conscientious tone and character of it. The only wonder is that Karsondas, with so much knowledge of the evil practices of the Maharajas, and so much knowledge of the injury to public morals from those practices, could have exercised such moderation and self-denial in exposing them."

The *Times of India* wrote:—"The Satya Prakash" has in reality verified its name. Through a long night of superstition and darkness, vile creatures like this Maharaj have been able to make their dens of vice and debauchery seem to their spell-bound followers to be the only temples of God. We have no doubt that the greatest of all public services has been performed by the excellent and intelligent Karsondas Mulji for his countrymen, a service that must for ever bear fruit."

Among individuals, I deem it proper to give here a few further opinions of well-known men of different communities, besides those already given in chapter first.

Karsondas's biographer Rao Sahab Mahipatram Rupram said: "Among all the good deeds of Karsondas his work in the Libel case is of the highest importance. It is that which has made his name famous in the world. The case has taught lessons to people of other than Hindu communities. The case has produced a great effect and is bound to produce such effect in the future also."

Mr. Hormasji Dadabhai wrote: "What India wants at present is a race of earnest thinkers and writers who can defy alike the frowns of the vulgar and the seductions of the great. That race is fast rising. Mr. Karsondas is a fair specimen of that class."

Rao Sahab Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik wrote: "If there was anything more than another which attracted to Mr. Karsondas's banner a band of zealous and truth-seeking friends, whose exertions contributed, under Providence, to the ultimate success of the undertaking, it was the simplicity and consistency of his character."

Mr. F. S. P. Lely, commissioner N. D., described Karsondas's victory as follows: "The great achievement of Karsondas's life. In the days to come he will be counted, because of it, among the heroes of his race."

#### ' NO LIBEL '

Sir Joseph Arnould, while differing from the Chief Justice on the important 1st issue stated:—"On the 1st Issue, the question that arises is this: Is the article complained of a libel; or is it so far justified by the occasion, *i.e.*, by the whole of the circumstances preceding and accompanying its publication, as to be, though defamatory, not *libellous*." He argues at great length his point of view and ends with the following para:—

"I think that, in addressing himself to the public he appealed to the right, and under the circumstances,

to the only available tribunal; he appealed to those who, in relation to the subject matter of the alleged libel, had *interest and a duty* corresponding to his own. I think that in giving the Plaintiff the prominence he has done in his article he was actuated by no malice, but simply dealt with the plaintiff as he found him, the representative and champion of his class; I think that in the language of the article itself there is no evidence of personal malice or malignity, but strong evidence of a public-spirited desire to denounce and put down a crying scandal and wickedness which was a stain upon the credit of the writer's caste, on the name of his nation, on the dignity and honour of human nature itself. For all these reasons, I am of opinion *that the article complained of is no libel*, and therefore that on the first issue the verdict ought to be for the defendant."

About Defendant's interest and duty, the Judge says :—

"As a Vallabhacharyan addressing his co-sectaries, as a Bania addressing his caste-fellows, above all, as a journalist addressing his readers composed principally of followers of the Maharajas, had he no interest, had he no duty in denouncing the malpractices which it is the principal object of this alleged libel to expose? It appears to me that he had both an interest and a duty.

"A public journalist is a public teacher; the true function of the press, that by virtue of which it has rightly grown to be one of the great powers of the modern world, is the function of teaching, elevating and enlightening those who fall within the range of its influence.

"To expose and denounce evil and barbarous practices, to attack usages and customs inconsistent with moral

purity and social progress, is one of its highest, its most imperative duties. When those evils and errors are consecrated by time, fenced round by custom, countenanced and supported by the highest and most influential class in society, when they are wholly beyond the control and supervision of any other tribunal, then it is the function and the duty of the press to intervene: honestly endeavouring by all the powers of argument, denunciation and ridicule, to change and purify the public opinion which is the real basis on which these evils are built and the real power by which they are perpetuated.

"As editor of the 'Satya Prakash,' the defendant was, in my opinion, acting within the clear limits of his duty (as defined in the case of *Harrison vs. Bush*) in denouncing to a public, principally composed of Bhattias and Banias, the moral delinquencies of the Maharajas."

I give below some more extracts from Sir Joseph Arnould's Judgment. They will throw a flood of light on the importance of the work done by Karsondas:—

"Dr. Wilson, who has studied this subject with that comprehensive range of thought, the result of varied erudition, which has made his name a foremost one among the living orientalisists of Europe says:—

"The sect of Vallabhacharya is a new sect, inasmuch as it has selected the God Krishna in one of his aspects, that of his adolescence and raised him to supremacy in that aspect." "It is a new sect in as far as it has established the Pushti Marg, or way of enjoyment in a natural and carnal sense."

"This succinct statement seems to contain the essence of the whole matter. It is Krishna, the darling of the 16,000 Gopees (or shepherdesses); Krishna, the love-hero the

husband of the 16,000 princesses, who is the paramount object of Vallabhacharya's worship. This tinges the whole system with the stain of carnal sensualism, of strange, transcendental lewdness. See, for instance, how the sublime Brahminical doctrine of union with "Brahma" is tainted and degraded by this sensuous mode of regarding the Deity. According to the old Brahminical tenet, "Brahma," the All-containing and Indestructible, the Soul of which the Universe is the Body, abides from eternity to eternity as the fountal source of all Spiritual existence; reunion with Brahma, absorption into Brahma, is the beatitude for which every separated spirit yearns and which after animating its appointed cycle of individuated living organisms, it is ultimately destined to attain. The teachers of the Vallabhachryan sect do not absolutely discard this great tenet, but they degrade it. I have no wish to wade through all the theosophic nonsense and nastiness of the Plaintiff's own chapter on "Adulterine Love;" but one of the myths he thus cites on the authority of the Brahad Vaman Puran, perfectly illustrates what I mean. For many ages the incarnations of the Veds prayed Shri Krishna, the most Excellent Being for a sight of his form; the wish being granted, desire was produced in them and they prayed to Krishna to satisfy their hearts' desire, so that they might enjoy with him in the form of women; this desire also was granted, and the traditions, under the *form of women* enjoyed Krishna as Gopees with adulterine love in the mythical forest of "Vrij."

"The comment of the Plaintiff (for he is without question the writer or dictator of this article) upon this is, that if there were any sin in adulterine love, Krishna would not have turned these Veds into Gopees for the

purpose of enjoying them; but there is no sin in such love when its object is God; for "God is all form. He is in the form of father, and he is in the form of husband; he is in the form of brother; and he is in the form of son. In whatever shape one may wish to love God, his wishes are complied with accordingly."

"Thus then is the pure and sublime notion of the reunion of all spirits that animate living but perishable forms, with the Eternal Spirit, not limited by form debased into a sexual and carnal coition with the most sensuous of the manifestations or "avatars" of God.

"But it goes further than this; unition with Brahma in the Kali-Yug (or Iron age) being no longer possible through the medium of mystical intercourse with Krishna; it must be obtained in some other way.

"The witness Mathuradas Lowji explains in what way; this is what he says:—

"The connection with Brahma (necessary to the soul's becoming one with Brahma) in the Kali-Yug is only possible through the Maharaj. The connection is to be had by carnal intercourse between the Maharaj and the Vaishnavas—the female devotees of the Vaishnava persuasion."

"This then is the order of descent; spiritual unition with Brahma; mystical coition with Krishna; carnal copulation with the Maharaj. For, as Dr. Wilson says, and as we shall see more at large under the next head of evidence. "The Maharaj is considered by a great many of his followers as an incarnation of God, as God incarnate according to Hindu notions, which are peculiar on that subject. The Vallabhacharyans hold that Vallabhacharya and his official descendants are

of the duty of stating it, could have impelled the witnesses for the defendant to come forward as they have done on his behalf. For the majority of these witnesses are not students, or editors, or non-believers; they are grave, reputable, middle-aged, family men, having a firm belief in the teachings of the ancient religion and a profound reverence for the authority of their ancient scriptures.

Lakhmidas Khimji, one of the twelve leading Setts of the Bhattia caste; Mangaldas Nathoobhoy, the Bania Justice of the Peace, and the well-known founder of Hindu Girls' schools; Khattaw Maccanje, Mathuradass Lowjee, and other witnesses of that stamp, are hardly likely to have come forward to give evidence they did not believe, in order to encounter general odium in the sect and determined dislike in their caste. Dr. Bhau Dajee is not indeed a member of the sect or caste, but he has enjoyed an extensive and lucrative practice among the wealthy Vallabhacharyans, and for the last ten or twelve years has attended every Maharaj who, during that period, has visited Bombay. It is scarcely probable, on the ordinary principles of human nature, that Dr. Bhau Dajee, by the evidence he has given, should risk the loss of such a practice, except from a firm conviction that what he had to say was true, and that being true, he ought to make it public. On the whole the fair inference as to the evidence for the defendants is, that being given at considerable risk and at considerable sacrifice, it would only be given under a sense of duty founded on a firm conviction of its truth and of its public importance. "

As regards the Plaintiff's evidence the judge said: "And this conclusion is all important in its bearing



on the value and credibility of the Plaintiff's evidence : it is not only that having deliberately perjured himself on this one occasion, his oath, where he stands alone in contradiction to credible testimony, is utterly valueless for all purposes and on all occasions; it goes further than this: the fact, as to which doubt is impossible, that the plaintiff had syphilis on two occasions in the year 1860, shakes to pieces the whole framework of his evidence and shows it all to be conceived in a spirit of hypocrisy and falsehood."

"Convinced as I am on evidence the most clear and conclusive that this man laboured under an attack of syphilis, the result of impure connection, about the very time this alleged libel was published, I am constrained to regard these expressions of simulated purity as the offensive language of hardened hypocrisy."

Justice Arnould's opinion about the songs sung in honour of Maharajas:

"The hymns or sacred songs of a sect are generally the most fervid exposition of their religious feelings. The hymns sung by the women of the Vallabhacharya sect in honour of the Maharajas and in their presence are certainly no exception to this general rule. They are passionate with all the passion of the East, erotic pantings for fruition of a lover who is also a God; as it is said of the Gopees in the Vishnu Puran, "every instant without Krishna they count a myriad of years, and forbidden by fathers, husbands, they go forth at night to sport with Krishna, the object of their love." So these hymns sung at this day, as the Plaintiff admitted, by the wives and daughters of the Vallbhacharyans to their Maharajas express the most unbridled desire, the most impatient longing for the enjoyments of adulterine love."

Side by side with this opinion I give also the opinion about these hymns pronounced by the Chief Justice. It is as follows :—

‘ All songs connected with the god Krishna, which were brought before us were of an amorous character, and it appeared that songs of a courrupting and licentious tendency, both in idea and expression, are sung by young females to the Maharajas, upon festive occasions, in which they are identified with the god, in his most licentious aspect. In these songs, as well as in stories, both written and traditional, which latter are treated as of a religious character in the sect, the subject of sexual intercourse is most prominent. Adultery is made familiar to the minds of all; it is nowhere discouraged or denounced; but on the contrary, in some of the stories, those persons who have committed that great moral and social offence are commended. The love and subserviency inculcated by the Hindu religion to be due in a spiritual sense to the Supreme Being has been by those corrupt teachings materialized, and to a large extent transferred to those who claim to be his living incarnations.’

I give below the Chief Justice's opinion on the Plaintiff's evidence :—

“ Upon this conflict of evidence between the plaintiff alone, and the three witnesses Dr. Dajee, Dalpatram and Lakhmidas, coupled with the non-production of Goverdhandas, or any of the three medical men who made the last examination, I feel myself compelled to come to the conclusion, that the Plaintiff has allowed his personal interests to overcome his respect for truth, while on his oath in this court. And having reluctantly but confidently arrived at the conviction that he has

in this instance wilfully foreswore himself, I can place no trust or reliance upon any denials he has given to the personal acts of immorality with which he has been charged."

I now quote the concluding words of the noble Judge Sir Joseph Arnould:—

"This trial has been spoken of as having involved a great waste of the public time. I cannot quite agree with that opinion. No doubt much time has been spent in hearing this cause, but I would fain hope it has not been all time wasted.

"It seems impossible that this matter should have been discussed thus openly before a population so intelligent as that of the natives of Western India, without producing its results. It has probably taught some to think; it must have led many to enquire. It is not a question of theology that has been before us. It is a question of morality. The principle for which the defendant and his witnesses have been contending is simply this that what is morally wrong cannot be theologically right, that when practices which sap the very foundations of morality, which involve a violation of the eternal and immutable laws of Right, are established in the name and under the sanction of Religion, they ought, for the common welfare of Society, and in the interest of Humanity itself, to be publicly denounced and exposed. They have denounced them, they have exposed them, at a risk and to a cost which we cannot adequately measure. These men have done determined battle against a foul and powerful delusion. They have dared to look Custom and Error boldly in the face, and proclaim before the world of their votaries,

that their Evil is not Good, that their Lie is not the Truth. In this doing they have done bravely and well. It may be allowable to express a hope that what they have done will not have been in vain, that the seed they have sown will bear its fruit, that their courage and consistency will be rewarded by a steady increase in the number of those, whom their words and their examples have quickened into thought and animated to resistance, whose homes they have helped to cleanse from loathsome lewdness, and whose souls they have set free from a debasing bondage."

Just after the trial, The "Times of India" wrote comments on the decision of the Libel Case in which the writer advised the reformers as follows :—

"And to commemorate their achievement and the glorious battle that they have fought, we think that the Reformers will set up in their houses in golden character, the noble and impressive words of Sir Joseph Arnould."

Rao Sahab Mahipatram, Karsondas's biographer, wrote :—

"His (Sir Joseph Arnould's concluding words of his judgment) holy words are worthy of being engraved in our hearts, and it is the bounden duty of every native of India to do all he can to fulfil the sacred hope expressed by this righteous Judge. All honour be to his memory !"

When we remember the times of excitement in which the reformers had to work from the times of the 'Chappan Bhog' controversy of the year 1855, when we remember the paucity of the number of the reformers who were bold enough to help and support Karsondas openly

throughout the trial, when we remember that owing to a sad mistake of one of the reformers, Narmdashunker, the reformers were rightly or wrongly called atheists, when we remember that the staunch Vaishnavas believed a Maharaja to be an incarnation of the Deity, believed that he could not do any wrong, and that he could not be a bad man, and that it was a sin to give evidence against a Maharaj in a court of justice, did not believe anything against his character, and that any one who did should not be spoken to and should be outcasted, when we bear in mind the conspiracy that was entered into by the Bhattia caste from which Karsondas had to get his best witnesses because it was a community wholly devoted to Maharajas, when we bear in mind that the sword of excommunication that was hanging on the heads of likely witnesses, then and then only we can thoroughly appreciate the nobility and the boldness of the 33 witnesses who gave their evidence to support Karsondas's plea of justification. As Justice Arnould said, nothing but a strong belief in the truth of what they had stated, and a fine conviction of the duty of stating it, could have compelled the witnesses for the defendant to come forward as they had done on his behalf. But for their evidence it would have become next to impossible for Karsondas to have succeeded in the Case. - If Karsondas had failed in his plea of justification then coupled with the Chief Justice's verdict in favour of the Plaintiff, the result on public morality would have been disastrous. This calamity for the country was averted solely by the witnesses who gave their evidence on behalf of Karsondas. It is from this standpoint Mr. F. S. P. Lely said that the names of Karsondas's witnesses in the Libel Case "ought

to be written in gold on the walls of New India." In this chapter, I would be failing in my duty towards these brave souls of our country, if I did not mention not only their names but also the true evidence that they gave to prove Karsondas's pleas of justification. I shall therefore give the names of important witnesses. I shall then give a few important extracts from the evidence of some witnesses to show that it required boldness of a very high type to give evidence of the kind which has been recorded in this chapter.

The names of the 17 important witnesses of the Defendant:—

Dr. John Wilson, Rao Saheb Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik, Sheth Mathooradas Lowjee, Dr. Bhau Dajee, Dr. Dhirajram Dalpatram, Sheth Lukhmidas Khimji, Mr. Kalabhai Lalloobhai, Mr. Chaturbhuj Walji, Mr. Damodar Jetha, Mr. Mungaldas Nathoobhai, Shet Khattau Makanjee, Mr. Thackersey Narayanjee, Mr. Rawjee Sunderjee, Mr. Kandas Manoharam, Kavi Narmada-shunker Lalshunker, Mr. Ramdas Bhanji, and Mr. Tribhowandas Dwarkadas.

I give below in Karsondas's own words the tribute he paid to a few of them:—

"Dr. Wilson's labours in this trial deserve special notice. He placed at the disposal of the defendant his rich and multifarious stores of learning, which proved of surpassing value. Throughout the whole trial this learned missionary ably sustained the character which he fills, in the estimation of the natives of India, that of a philanthropist. Much credit is due to Drs. Bhau Daji and Dhirajram Dalpatram, for the disinterestedness of their

evidence. They cast aside all consideration of self, when truth was to be established and morality to be vindicated. Mathuradas Lavji furnished the sinews of war, so far as learning was concerned; his capacious mind and memory comprehended the whole range of vernacular literature, both ancient and modern."

### **Important portions from the witnesses called by Karsondas.**

Extracts from Mr. Mathooradas Lowjee's evidence :—

1. I am known in my sect by the name of "Mathooras Panthi" because my opinions are opposed to the immoralities and adultery of the Maharajas, and as if I was the founder of a new sect. This is not the case. From my infancy I was instructed by my father not to believe in the practices of the Maharajas, which, he said, were immoral and adulterous.

2. The Maharajas' adulteries were a matter of notoriety in the sect, and there has been no improvement since 1855.

3. There is a club among the Bhattias of my sect called "Ras Mandlee," of which the members are very much respected, as they pay greater homage to the Maharajas, and commit more adultery. The members would not admit a stranger. They go to the meeting with their wives.

4. I have seen ten or twenty Maharajas worshipped by females. The females touch the soles of the Maharajas' feet with their hands, and then apply them to their own eyes. I have seen females perform this kind of worship to Plaintiff. Several Maharajas press the toes of their female devotees. Pressing the toes is a sign of a desire for adultery. When the females look at the Maharajas, the latter make signs with their eyes. Accordingly, the females take this hint and retire into a room. I speak this from my personal knowledge.

5. The 'gula' is thrown by the Maharaj on the persons of such females as he wishes to gratify his desire with.

'Gulal' water is also thrown by means of a syringe, and the Maharaja takes precise aim at the females. This is done with the same object and purpose. Females sing songs of an amorous character in the presence of the Maharajas such as "I was asleep and you awoke me," "you will ease my mind if you will take me," "you are my husband," and so on.

6. The doctrines propounded in Plaintiff's works and Gokulnathji's commentary, are to my mind productive of adultery in the sect, and lend encouragement to it.

7. That after the dedication, the Maharaj can do what he pleases with females, is a matter of notoriety.

8. I have seen Gokuladhisji make signs to females two or three times about five to six years ago.

9. I have seen Dwarkanathji Maharaj giving a signal to a female to go into his bed-room. On seeing me, he held back his hand with which he was making the signal. She was asking something of the Maharaj, and the latter said "take this"—(Witness explains the very indecent attitude and signal made). The female was a married woman, about twenty years of age.

Extract from Dr. Bhau Dajee's evidence:—

About twenty years ago, I saw a Maharaj exhibiting indecent pictures to men and women. His conversation was all about women; it was somewhat indecent.

Extract from Dr. Dhirajram Dalpstram's evidence:—

In December 1860, I attended upon him (plaintiff) professionally at his house. He was suffering from venereal affection; I made an ocular examination of it, and found it to be an ulcer. He gave me the history of the case; he said he had suffered from it 3 or 4 months previously and had caught it from an impure intercourse with a woman....Plaintiff said he suffered some years ago from the same affection...Plaintiff asked me if I had read in medical works that the disease would



go by having intercourse with a female free from it. I said I had not. He then said he had twice tried the experiment at Surat. He succeeded once in it, but not the second time because he was then much reduced.

Extracts from the evidence of Mr. Lukhmidas Khimjee :—

1. There is a temple dedicated to Luxmijee at Beyt, where I once saw Jadunathji Maharaj. There were females present in the temple. After throwing 'gula' on the image, he threw it upon a number of persons, and in doing so, he pressed the breasts of a Bhattia girl about fourteen years of age. As he squeezed her breast, she smiled. He threw the 'gula' upon the crowd, so that they might not see through it what he was doing.

2. I went to Plaintiff about one o'clock in the day, when he was in his bed. My uncle went up and shampooed one of his legs. I went up and followed his example. It is a great mark of respect to shampoo a Maharaja's legs. The Bhattia girl above alluded to, came there with a widow, about a quarter of an hour after our arrival there. The widow whispered something into Plaintiff's ears, upon which he desired us to go out. We obeyed the order. The widow came out with us and went in again. The girl was left in the bed-room. When I went out-side, my uncle informed me of the visit of the females. Afterwards, the widow came out, shut the door, put up the chain and held it with her hand. The girl was inside all the time. In consequence of certain conversation I had with my uncle, we both went in again to see "Ras lila," i. e., the Plaintiff's conversation with the girl. We were allowed to go in the moment we expressed a wish. I saw the Plaintiff having carnal connection with the girl. Several people are often anxious to see such "Ras lila." My uncle said that I would serve him (Plaintiff). I had to pay some money before

I was allowed to see "The Ras lila." The followers who are allowed to see the "lila", as well as the female who is defiled have to pay money for the indulgence. It is considered a pious act, and sure to lead to the paradise known as "Golok."

3. The "Ras mandlees" are a matter of notoriety; even a child of five years knows of its existence. Their existence is notorious this way:—they read the stories there, misinterpret them, and have connection with the women. Each member must go to the meeting with his wife, except the "Varkats", who are admitted without their wives. Those followers of the Maharajas who are members of the society are reputed to be pious and staunch devotees. The Varkats are procurers of women for the Maharajas. On one occasion, Plaintiff told me "the Varkats are persons who have corrupted us, Maharajas."

4. One day whilst I was sitting at the Plaintiff's temple, two females, one a married woman about 25 years of age, and the other a widow, came up. The former, when she approached the staircase, produced a silver goblet which she had concealed under her clothes. The Maharaj on seeing her, made her a signal to go into his bed room. She did not understand the signal, whereupon a female servant of the Maharaj, about 24 years of age, beckoned to her and said "come hither, Vaishnav!" Both the females then entered the bed-room. Plaintiff asked me to go and make immediate arrangements for the publication of the pamphlet. I went downstairs to the verandah but having had a suspicion in my mind, I went up again into the same room where I had been before. I found the widow sitting outside the door and remained there about half an hour, when first the Maharaj came out and turned pale on observing me. I also saw the young female come out; she was smiling and laughing. I thereupon thought that Plaintiff had carnal intercourse with her. She had not the silver goblet in her hand; it must have been

given to Plaintiff. The widow and the young woman then left.

5. The general reputation of the Maharajas as regards adultery is very bad. I have personal knowledge of the licentious conduct of ten, twelve or fifteen of them.

Extract from the evidence of Mr. Kalabhai Laloobhai:—

1. I was sitting one day with him (Plaintiff) on the first storey when a Baniya girl accompanied by a female servant of the Maharaj. She was about 14 or 15 years. She passed across the hall into a side room; and a Baniya who was sitting near got up and went away. Plaintiff left the hall and went into the side room. The female servant sat in the hall. 4 or 5 females came into the hall afterwards. I went to have my usual pan-suparee from Plaintiff towards the side room, and on opening the door of it, saw Plaintiff seated in a couch opposite the door, kissing and embracing the young woman.

2. On one occasion, I saw 2 or 3 "chachias" sitting near Plaintiff who advocated in their presence, the adulterous doctrines of the sect. Plaintiff said there was no sin in adultery; but it was wholesome and it purified the blood. He gave an instance of the athletes of the Gaekwar court, who he said kept many concubines, and used to engage themselves in cohabiting with them before they come out for a wrestle.

Extract from the evidence of Mr. Chaturbhuj Walji:—

I asked Plaintiff how was it that great men committed adultery of which there is prohibition in the Shastras. To this Plaintiff replied "there is no sin in adultery; on the contrary, it gives strength to and purifies the blood of man, and I say this from my own experience". Then he gave an instance of the athletes of the Gaekwar Court.

Extract from the evidence of Mr. Khattau Makanjee:—

I have heard some immoral and indecent songs addressed by females to the Maharajas, when the latter are invited to their houses.

Extract from the evidence of Mr. Narmadashunker Lalshunker :—

There is no morality of any kind whatever in the doctrines of Vallabhacharya.

We have seen the result of the Case. The Plaintiff succeeded so far as the first issue was concerned, because the Chief Justice pronounced that opinion in the Full Court, though Sir Joseph Arnould pronounced his clear opinion in Karsondas's favour even on this issue. The Chief Justice disbelieved the evidence of the Plaintiff, and therefore, although he decided in his favour, still he did not allow him costs. I quote here what the Chief Justice said :—

"After having found a verdict for the defendants upon the issue raised by the pleas of justification, the Plaintiff can only recover a verdict for nominal damages on the plea of not guilty. As we have felt obliged to disbelieve the Plaintiff on his oath and also the greater number of the witnesses produced to corroborate him, our verdict will be entered without costs.

The defendant to be entitled to the costs of the issues found in his favour."

In this Case, Karsondas incurred costs to the extent of Rs. 13,000. He got Rs. 11,500 from the Plaintiff. Thus the balance of Rs. 1500 and other miscellaneous sums that he was obliged to spend had to be borne by him. All this he got from his friends, Mr. Framji Patel, Sheths Gokaldas

Tejpal, Lakhmidas Khimjee and Khattav Makanjee. Karsondas also received a sum of Rs. 6,00 from two anonymous friends. The Plaintiff had to bear his costs and had to pay a portion of Defendant's costs and hence the total costs he had to bear came to Rs. 60,000, a sum which exceeded by Rs. 10,000 from the amount of damages he claimed from the Defendant.

By his victory, Karsondas's 30th year and the 62nd year of the 19th century became famous in the annals of Indian History. Karsondas nobly fulfilled his life's mission. In what way his moral triumph was received by the general public? Both the Vernacular and the English press gave due praises to Karsondas. Khoja reformers as a body honoured him. Dr. John Wilson honoured him at a public gathering for his bold stand in the cause of Truth and Purity in the presence of nearly 300 guests of different communities. Mr. Kandas Muncharam, on 13th July, 1862, gave a dinner party in honour of Mr. Karsondas.

#### KARSONDAS'S VICTORY.

I do not know whether there were other individuals who honoured him or not. The occasion was one when reformers ought to have honoured both Karsondas and his witnesses in a right royal fashion. No better occasion could have been found for bestowing public honours on Karsondas. The fact that this was not done by the public shows that Karsondas's work was a good deal ahead of his times.

So far as the members of the Vaishnava fold were concerned, the judgments came upon them as a great surprise. They had cherished hopes of victory. Sweetmeats were kept ready for distribution, but the judgments disappointed them. It was a virtual defeat of the Maharajas and in both judgments the Maharaja was disbelieved, his witnesses were

disbelieved and the Maharaja had to bear heavy costs. Vaishnavas naturally sympathised with Jadunathji. The whole Bania Mahajan was angry at the victory won by Karsondas. Even in the Kapole caste to which Karsondas belonged, ninety nine per cent. of that caste was dead against Karsondas. Even Karsonda's father who was living at this time was very much displeased. What does this state of things indicate? Does it in any way lessen the worth of the victory? To my mind it enhanced a thousandfold the value of Karsondas's work, because in a dark world, his was the only beacon light. What was the effect on Karsondas? In what light did he take the result of the case? Was he elated at his success? Was he disappointed? It is certain that he was not elated at all. It is said that success was a trial few but the highest souls could bear; but in this Case, Karsondas was one who did bear the trial nobly. He was like William Llyod Garrison. When Garrison's work was done, he retired into private life because he never cared for a life of excitement, and was a modest Christian having no personal ambition at all. In his paper, 'Liberator,' he had exhorted the Church to turn to true Christianity and part from its forms and dogmas. Karsondas, after his success in the Case, took to his old love. He had commenced to prepare a Gujarati-English Dictionary in 1860, and after the times of excitement through which he had to pass compulsorily, he being of a retired nature and being naturally inclined to be an author, took to completing his half-finished work of the dictionary. This was not because he was disappointed. I shall show later on how he on his part did continue his work of reformation of the sect of the Maharajas. As we are still on the subject of how Karsondas viewed his

success, I would here like to quote his own words which he used while replying to the Addresses that were presented to him by three public bodies when he was leaving Indian shores for a long voyage to England. In these three Addresses references were made to his work in the Libel Case, and hence Karsondas's replies necessarily had partially to refer to this subject. To the address of the 'Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha' his reply was as follows: "It is your goodness that you honour me for having conducted the 'Rastgoftar' and 'Satya Prakash' with independence and public spirit. In doing so I have discharged only my duty as a journalist; and having discharged the duty of exposing the most horrible practices which were in vogue under the name of religion, I indeed feel highly grateful to the Almighty for the good result which has accrued therefrom." In reply he gave to the Address presented by the Khoja Reformers, the following passage is important for our purpose: "The attempt that was made to prevent me from realizing my feeble attempts at reformation, has proved unsuccessful and ultimately Truth and Reform have been crowned with success by God and I have been relieved from a great calamity and I feel deeply thankful for this result; and I am more convinced than ever by the result that has been achieved, that God never deserts those who continue to act truthfully but that He always helps them in all possible ways." To the Address given by the Editors of the Vernacular Papers and Periodicals, Karsondas's reply contained the following important passage: "God has amply rewarded me for all the anxiety and trouble I had to undergo while the Case was going on, and this result has more than convinced me that those who remain

steadfastly true and discharge their public duties conscientiously without succumbing to monetary temptations are always befriended by Him. I do not count the success in that Case to be my personal success. It is the victory of Reform and Truth and it has given great courage to public workers to use their pen in an independent spirit. Indeed for this our thanksgiving should be to God."

After the Case was over, the study that Karsondas had begun before the Case was continued, and this was done in order to enable him to enrich the English language by writing a work on the sect of the Maharajas.

Such a work he was able to write and get published. It is a monumental work both because it is original and was brought out after intense labour. Karsondas himself writes about this book as follows: "It is the history of a sect in which immorality is elevated to the rank of a divine law, the immutable distinctions of right and wrong, the sharp line of demarcation between virtue and vice, human personality and human responsibility are lost and confounded in a system of theology which begins in lewdness and ends in the complete subversion of the first principles of our common nature. Such a system has, perhaps, no parallel in the annals of our race. Its effects can be more easily conceived than described. It has checked and arrested the healthy growth of all moral power. It has furnished its votaries with principles of action, which, if carried out in their integrity, must produce the dissolution of society; for it treats holiness of life as a crime, and proclaims to the world of its votaries that man becomes acceptable to his Maker in and through sin."



In conclusion he expresses his hopes as follows :  
 "If this work should at all contribute to the good end of a vile and debasing superstition, we shall have reaped a rich reward." I conclude this portion by giving only two opinions about this work from the English Press. The "Morning Herald" on April, 21, 1865, wrote: "The present volume minutely describes that foul service, compared with which the abominations of Mormonism are decent." "The Literary Gazette" wrote: "The complete history of the sect of Vallubhacharya which is unfolded here, reads like a chapter of romance, with more sensation than even Miss Braddon would resort to in her wildest flights. It is the history of a class of priests claiming to be of divine origin, who have succeeded in elevating the grossest immorality to a law of heaven."

Further, while he was staying at Rajkot during the years 1867-70, Karsondas got translated from Sanskrit, a Drama written in Samvat 1693 by a Brahmin of Gujarat named Damodar Bhatt, called "Pakhund Dharma Khundan Natak" or "A Drama for Smashing a False Religion." Although nearly three hundred years have passed, still, while we read it, it appears as if it was narrating the condition of things prevailing at present. I have already given in this book a small extract from this drama.

#### IEWS AND HOPES OF KARSONDAS.

I now present before the readers, views and hopes expressed by Karsondas in his books, so as to give out a correct view of the man who took a heroic part in the great struggle :

"Owing, however, to the fearful corruptions which subsequently, and by degrees, crept in, through the perverted sensuality of his (Vallabhacharya's) descendants, now declining, and it is hoped, for the sake of degraded

this worship is humanity, approaching extinction, unless healthy reforms be introduced to restore it to comparative purity."

"Priestly craft is ever alert to obtain by fair means or foul, the wealth needful to the sustentation of its power and self-indulgence. This is a vice not limited in its operations to India, or to the chiefs of the sects of the Hindu religion : it pervades all human society, with greater or lesser energy. The scheme is supported by very plausible and just reasoning, for it is but right that those whose function is exercised for the behoof of society at large, and who are precluded from obtaining the means of livelihood from those sources common to the majority, should be supported by that majority from whom their labours are performed ; and it is only when urged to excess, for culpable purposes, that this becomes reprehensible. The Maharajas, consequently, as teachers of a doctrine and priests of a religion, when duly restricting themselves within their province, are thoroughly entitled to the means of living at the hands of those whom they teach. It is merely perversion and excess that can be complained of."

"Hindus, we exhort you to educate your females, that you may have a virtuous progeny from a pure and uncontaminated source ; for, under the circumstances, we have been compelled to narrate, often to our utter disgust, a man cannot be sure that his child is his own, and not the offspring of a licentious voluptuary. Virtue is inherent in the female breast, and if duly nurtured, like a fair tree properly cultivated and tended, will in its season yield its noble crop of cheering blossom and sustaining fruit. Abjure the degrading tenets that debase you ; arouse yourselves to the dignity of manhood,

and cast the chain from your necks, trample down this vile priest-hood into the mire they create around you, and raise yourselves to the position your intelligence fits you to hold. Divest your females of the notion that intercourse with the Maharajas is an honour, and that amorous connection with them is bliss. Make them renounce this vile superstition. Claim them as your own only, and bind them to yourselves and your families by the strong and hallowed ties of conjugal, parental, and filial affection. Let not your homes have the scent of the impurities of the temple, whose odour should be disgusting to your nostrils."

"We have thus made a note of the career of Jadunathji Maharaj during his short stay in Bombay. In concluding this note we beg permission to give our impartial opinion about Shri Jadunathji Maharaj. The praises of this Maharaj formerly published in the "Satya Prakash" paper are not lessened by the subsequent controversy. Of all the Maharajas who are known to us, Shri Jadunathji Maharaj has been found to be the most courageous and the most discriminating. Without regard to the unjust means, the said Maharaj has latterly adopted to injure us, we must say that by a public approval of female education the Maharaj has rendered himself worthy of no little respect. Had not the poet Narmadashunker erred, and had he not plunged him into the remarriage controversy, we should this day have seen the Maharaj advancing instead of retiring from the field of reform. But often times some slight incidents prove unfavourable. The same is the case now and we are really sorry for it." (Satya Prakash 18-11-61.

"O religious preceptors! You are not our enemies. You have not in any way injured us. We entertain no

malice against you. We wish that you may receive all due respect as religious preceptors. And we have not had any business or dealings with you. Then, O religious preceptors, why should we entertain any malice against you and annoy you without cause? If, in telling you the truth, any hard words have ever been used do you forgive us. Remember that those who become flatterers and do not endeavour to lead you from a crooked path, are your enemies in the shape of friends. And those are your true friends who warn you that if you do not leave the crooked path your persuasion and dignity will be prejudiced. O! We heartily wish that you would quit the evil path and come up on the good path that we may never be under the necessity of writing any thing acrimonious." (Satya Prakash 18th November, 1861.).

"Were the Maharajas, as the Jesuits were, an intellectual and highly educated class, we might conceive of such a subjection to them; but the instances of culture among these men are so extremely rare, and their spiritual ascendancy is so entirely maintained as a hereditary right, without any respect to their character or qualifications for the sacerdotal office, that there is nothing by which we can account for the influence they exercise."

"We wish heartily that this paper may not have to say ill of the Maharajas. But it is an error to suppose that, that this or any other newspaper will be backward in expressing just and proper thoughts, when they find that public interests are at stake. It is true that this, as well as other respectable newspapers, will always refrain, as they have done till this day, from publishing false slanders, and ungrounded stories about the

Maharajas; but no editor, living under the shadow and protection of the English Government, will draw his pen backwards in denouncing any unjust act tending to jeopardize the weal of thousands. None will be afraid to publish anything just and proper. We are sorry to say that the Maharajas and their followers have, by thus shutting the mouths of editors, ruined their own cause."

"Those who inserted these four articles may insert fifty more, but no tyrants or their slavish followers will have power to impede the mighty torrent of civilisation. We are sure that the current of civilisation and liberty will, in a short time, overspread the whole of Hindustan, check the force of the opponents of civilisation, and break the chains of oppression."

"It will not fail to excite both wonder and sorrow in any man of good sense to see that the very Shettias who have been the foremost among the reformers, and thoroughly understand the beauty which the English rule affords, should have, by signing such a hard document, drawn the chains of despotism on their own hands. We wish and pray to God that our wish may succeed, that these Shettias may speedily look to their own respectability, to their own state in life, to the beauties of the benign and free government they are under, and boldly break off the shackles of despotism which they have worn."

"O God! may the chain of despotism which the leading Shettias, our companions in the cause of civilisation, have worn round their necks be quickly removed. O God! may the Shettias who have temporarily lost their senses, and forgotten their respectability and position, recover their senses soon. O God! may the cloud of ignorance and doubt which has obscured the vision of our Shettias be quickly dispelled, and may the

faces of those who oppose civilisation at once be covered with paleness. Amen."

"On our part we advise the Maharajas and their leading followers, that, instead of throwing this large sum of 50 or 60 thousand rupees into the water, they should rather expend it on the Victoria Museum, by which means they would be expressing affectionate and loyal regard towards Her Gracious Majesty, and would be aiding an important undertaking. We suggest an easy and plain way.....The Maharajas should never interfere in any man's private quarrels and concerns; they should win the love and affectionate regard of their friends and followers by upright and moral behaviour; they should always aid such undertakings as will improve the cause of their country's progress; they should cease all money dealings with people of other castes; they should preach morality every day, and observe no distinction between the rich and the poor followers. If they act in this manner, we confidently say that they will never have to appear in a court."

"It might have been foreseen that power such as that exercised by the Maharajas, resting on hereditary superstition of the most debasing character and maintained by craft and cunning, must ultimately be overthrown. It was impossible that an authority having no other support could continue when the light of intelligence was thrown upon it. It must necessarily expire amidst the ridicule and scorn of those to whom its true character is shown. The impending fall of an illegitimate but long-continued domination, arbitrary and tyrannous in its pressure on the consciences of men,

is often accelerated by strange and unexpected circumstances. And thus it is with the power and influence of these Maharajas."

"That men who, in the ordinary business of life, and in their daily intercourse with others, are acute and intelligent, quick to perceive their rights and persistent in maintaining them, should submit to be the victims and the dupes of these priests, and should adopt and allow the vile practices they have introduced, is a mystery which we are unable to solve except by a reference to the power of superstition to enthrall the mind."

"It would be strange indeed if the discussions awakened by the trial should bring about no tangible result. The sect, though to all appearance powerful in organisation, is in an unsettled state. While the old and bigoted cling with pertinacity to the dogmas of their childhood, the young and the educated detach themselves more and more from its contaminating influences. Assailed from without, and racked by internal discussions, the Vallabhacharyan faith must, sooner or later, be superseded by a rational form of worship. The obstacles in the way of a thorough revolution are great but not insurmountable. That the power of the Maharajas for evil is not what it was fifteen years ago, is a sign of progress. Let us express a fervent hope that, by the combined exertions and the steady co-operation of all lovers of truth and moral purity, the Vallabhacharyans may emerge from the darkness of error and falsehood into the glorious light of day, and that the faith proclaimed by Vallabh four hundred years ago may be crushed by the weight of its own enormities."

" We feel confident that our readers will concur with us in denouncing the flagrant abuses we have pointed out, and help us to hold them up to the indignation of the world. We sincerely hope that this public exposure of gross social evils will tend to their ultimate and speedy abatement. "

Karsondas wished the evil to be attacked by Legislation. He had properly gauged the immensity of the evil. He wanted his people to devote their energies to social reform. This again shows that he himself was not in favour of founding a new reformed Church but wished only in the initial stage to bring about reformation in the rotten state in which the Vaishnava Maharajas were wallowing. In this connection I give below a very important passage which throws a flood of light on his views :—

" The existence of so full a plague-spot would suggest that our moral nature has its antithetical phases, and, like the luminaries of the sky, is now at its zenith and now at its nadir; and that the absolute progression of our race, without Divine aid, is but an idle dream and a baseless hope. It would almost seem to be the duty of the rulers of the realm of India to prohibit these practices, in the interest of our common humanity, leaving to public opinion the delicate task of correcting mere social follies and aberrations. Our governments may be legitimately held to be guardians of public morals. At any rate, the efforts of philanthropists for the enlightenment and reformation of India should be increased a hundredfold."



is often accelerated by strange and unexpected circumstances. And thus it is with the power and influence of these Maharajas."

"That men who, in the ordinary business of life, and in their daily intercourse with others, are acute and intelligent, quick to perceive their rights and persistent in maintaining them, should submit to be the victims and the dupes of these priests, and should adopt and allow the vile practices they have introduced, is a mystery which we are unable to solve except by a reference to the power of superstition to enthrall the mind."

"It would be strange indeed if the discussions awakened by the trial should bring about no tangible result. The sect, though to all appearance powerful in organisation, is in an unsettled state. While the old and bigoted cling with pertinacity to the dogmas of their childhood, the young and the educated detach themselves more and more from its contaminating influences. Assailed from without, and racked by internal discussions, the Vallabhacharyan faith must, sooner or later, be superseded by a rational form of worship. The obstacles in the way of a thorough revolution are great but not insurmountable. That the power of the Maharajas for evil is not what it was fifteen years ago, is a sign of progress. Let us express a fervent hope that, by the combined exertions and the steady co-operation of all lovers of truth and moral purity, the Vallabhacharyans may emerge from the darkness of error and falsehood into the glorious light of day, and that the faith proclaimed by Vallabh four hundred years ago may be crushed by the weight of its own enormities."

" We feel confident that our readers will concur with us in denouncing the flagrant abuses we have pointed out, and help us to hold them up to the indignation of the world. We sincerely hope that this public exposure of gross social evils will tend to their ultimate and speedy abatement. "

Karsondas wished the evil to be attacked by Legislation. He had properly gauged the immensity of the evil. He wanted his people to devote their energies to social reform. This again shows that he himself was not in favour of founding a new reformed Church but wished only in the initial stage to bring about reformation in the rotten state in which the Vaishnava Maharajas were wallowing. In this connection I give below a very important passage which throws a flood of light on his views :—

" The existence of so full a plague-spot would suggest that our moral nature has its antithetical phases, and, like the luminaries of the sky, is now at its zenith and now at its nadir; and that the absolute progression of our race, without Divine aid, is but an idle dream and a baseless hope. It would almost seem to be the duty of the rulers of the realm of India to prohibit these practices, in the interest of our common humanity, leaving to public opinion the delicate task of correcting mere social follies and aberrations. Our governments may be legitimately held to be guardians of public morals. At any rate, the efforts of philanthropists for the enlightenment and reformation of India should be increased a hundredfold."

## EFFECT OF THE CASE.

What effect the Maharaja Libel Case produced on the conduct of the Maharajas? Rao Saheb Mahipatram Rupram answers this as follows:

" We should not forget the lesson that we have learnt by the Maharaj Libel Case. The result of that Case was that for some time the immoral priests became crest-fallen, but yet they have neither left their evil path nor have their evil deeds come to an end. The same state has again commenced to re-appear. It appears that the great social service of those who devoted all their energies with all their heart and soul for the good of their fellow countrymen and country-women have gone utterly in vain. The healthy effect of that case is on the point of being effaced. We must therefore be up and doing. We should be the last persons to expect reforms to be effected by these priests who are steeped in un-righteousness, who are of bad conduct and are also ignorant. It is necessary to start a new Religious Association by discarding those vicious and foolish priests. It is foolish to expect good trees to grow from rotten seeds. We ought to sow pure seeds of good religion. We shall then undoubtedly reap all those reforms which were desired by that benevolent reformer Karsondas. If we persist in doing the work which he commenced then Karsondas's aim will be realized."

" I ask my Hindu brethren to what extent they have put into practice the good thoughts of this noble-hearted, learned Judge (Justice Arnould)? What use they have made of this great success of the reformers? Brothers, why are you sitting with folded hands? You have succeeded by taking great pains, by spending a good deal, and by

showing great courage. Why have you not taken advantage of this victory and why do you still allow the opportunity to pass? This advantage can't be gained without exertions on our part. We have still to do much. This is merely a beginning, a good beginning. You have well begun and now it is proper to make further progress. If you don't advance, the fruits of your labour will be wasted. If you think of taking rest after that great fight, even then, I say, that you have taken too much rest. Now, therefore, gentlemen, awake and arise! If you want to crown your own noble efforts and those of that excellent Kapole Karsondas Mulji with further success, get up and make further progress. The tree that has been rotten from its root, how can we improve it? Why do you still stick to it? Time is passing and no work is done. When work has already begun, it is our duty to continue that philanthropic work, because we are not sure how long we shall live.....Tear away the rotten, decaying, unclean tree from its root, and in its place, plant another pure, beautiful and sacred tree. Why do you lag behind. Of whom are you afraid? Whatever you sow, that you shall reap. In this world, happiness and misery rise and fall, take place by turns, and we are always occupied with our work and our trade. This ought not to come in our way of doing good deeds and performing adventurous actions. We had not with us in the years 1860-62 the seed of all reforms; in this year 1877 we have secured that. Therefore do not allow this golden opportunity to pass; rather take pains to earn a better name and fame. Take into your head to do the welfare work for yourselves, your family, and your posterity. I humbly remind those who sided with Jadunathji that they had ample time to consider matters coolly. An

obstinate man does not see clearly, but when the fit of passion passes away, then he regains his senses. There is no reason for you to remain obdurate now. Let both sides be friends to each other, and march together on the path of truth and virtue."

#### SCOTCHED BUT NOT KILLED.

J. Murray Mitchell, M.A.L.L.B., in his book "Hinduism Past and Present" mentions: "It was hoped that the power of the Sect was broken by the merciless exposure made at the trial; but the great majority of the followers of those wretched Maharajas remains as besotted as before."

In 1911, Messrs. D. Lukhmidas and Co., the Publishers of the Maharaj Libel Case, finding the book on the Maharaja Libel Case to have been out of print, got it reprinted. the Publisher's Preface contains the following:—

"There can be no doubt that things have improved since then, but it is open to question how far the Vaishnava Maharajas have improved from Policy more than Principle.

Very many of them still lay claims, though not quite so openly and unblushingly as before, to being "gods" but without being "godly."

Faith has its freaks, and is none the less blind than Love.

The Maharaja Libel Case is true to-day and the prototypes of Jadunathji are still "alive and kicking."

The Vallabhkul Charitra Darpan, Vallabhkul Chhal Kapat Darpan and Vallabhkul Dambh Darpan, three Hindi Books (Price Rs. 2). By Swami Blaktanand throws interesting light on the life and doings of some

of these "Gurus", and would indicate that though the serpent is somewhat scorched, the poison is there, and they are as "dangerous" and "wanted" as before."

#### NO VINDICTIVE SPIRIT.

Karsondas had the nobility of soul. He showed great wisdom in pointing out faults in the Maharajas whom he honoured as his own spiritual guides; he never criticised or corrected, save in love. He had deep love in his heart and that enabled him to seek the good of these Maharajas in whom he detected flaws and errors. He never criticised them in a spirit of exultation. Even after his victory in the Libel Case, he did not prosecute Jadunathji for perjury, even though there were cent. per cent. chances of his succeeding. The opinion pronounced by Sir Joseph Arnould on this issue was so well-supported by weighty arguments that I am led to believe that Karsondas had good chances of success. Yet he even did not file an appeal in the Queen's Council against the Chief Justice's decision against him on the first issue, even though there were good chances of his success. This shows the magnanimity of Karsondas's heart. His friend and biographer Rao Sahab Mahipatram finds fault with Karsondas for these steps of his; but I think he is wrong. Karsondas had no intention of taking mean revenge on Jadunathji. His object was to reform the Maharajas and to protect ignorant Vaishnava devotees. That object was thoroughly gained by the unanimous decision of both the Chief Justice and Sir Joseph Arnould and that was enough for a gentleman of Karsondas's type. By the Maharaja Libel Case he took the first step in the great reformatory movement of India. He laid the foundation and hoped that others would continue the beneficent work he had so grandly begun. His fight for

the cause was too much in advance of the times. It is true that we have not achieved as much fruit of Karsondas's work as was expected at the time of his victory by people of other communities. They had very little knowledge about the depth of degradation to which the Viashnavas had fallen. The seeds of superstitions that had been sown had been laid so deeply that it was extremely difficult to eradicate the mighty structure root and branch in one or two generations. History was full of evidence of the utter inefficiency even of the noblest principles when they are promulgated among an ignorant and uncultured community. It will be seen from the opinions quoted here down till the year 1911 A.D., that Karsondas's rational philosophy of the Vaishnava Sect has not been very fruitful. This is no fault of our hero. He was head and shoulders ahead of his times. He pointed out the weakest point in the Vaishnava faith, and therein his mission ended. It was not the correct view to take that it was Karsondas's mistake that he did not prosecute his work further, that the reformers of those times were disorganized and were not of the right mettle and therefore the result was not great. However we may feel disappointed with the very slow progress made, still one must admit that we have considerably advanced since the year 1862. For this progress, both Hindus in general and Vaishnavas in particular, should feel a deep debt of gratitude to the strenuous efforts made by their countryman Karsondas, who though weak in body had the wonderful energy of spirit in him. To achieve thorough success in this field of moral reform will still require a very long time. It must bide its time, until the minds of the Vaishnavas are ripe for its reception. In this field, Karsondas worked not for the benefit of his generation, but

for posterity. This will be seen because he has himself admitted that "the obstacles in the way of a thorough revolution are great;" and from the quotation given by Karsondas from his favourable author Samuel Smiles in his work as follows: "Labourers in the public good, especially, have to work long and patiently, often uncheered by the prospect of immediate recompense or result. The seeds they sow some times lie hidden under the winter's snow, and before the spring comes the husbandman may have gone to his rest...Adam Smith sowed the seeds of a great social amelioration in that dingy old University of Glasgow where he so long laboured, there laying the foundations of his 'Wealth of Nations'; and seventy years passed before his work bore substantial fruits, nor indeed are they all gathered in yet." Let us not find fault with Karsondas unnecessarily, but let us judge his great work in the light of the sentiments expressed by Samuel Smiles in the quotation given above.

### DEVILS AS GODS ?

Before the birth of Swami Dayananda and Karsondas Mulji, the religious heads of the Swaminarayan Sect had done a good deal to attack bitterly the Vallabhacharya Sect, Dayanand Saraswati attacked the Maharajas or Gosainjis as we have seen in the earlier part of this chapter; but it was left to Karsondas to attack them in a way peculiarly his own. His mighty press agitation dealt such a severe blow to the immoralities of the sect of the Maharajas that it is impossible for ever for that sect to regain its former hold on its followers. The sect is on its downward path; it is merely a question of time when this faith will be totally extinct. After the decision in the Maharaja Libel Case, the Bombay Gazette



published an editorial article in a humourous vein and put the following question to the Vaishnavas referring to the Maharajas : " If these men are your Gods, what must your devils be ? " .

I have devoted much space in speaking about the Libel Case, and that too deliberately ; otherwise it would hardly be possible for any reader in the present enlightened age to assess Karsondas's work at its true value and to understand why he deserved to be called a hero.

The lengthy treatment absolutely essential in the circumstances of the case, I am afraid, is likely to create a wrong impression both in the minds of Indians who do not belong to the sect of Vallabhacharya and among members of the different communities residing in India and among people of different nations. In the first instance, I must disabuse the minds of all and sundry, by mentioning that the sect of Vallabhacharya in the year 1862 consisted of only two lakhs of people in a whole population of twelve crores. In other words, Vallabhacharyans in the whole Hindu population constituted only a six hundredth part. What then about ethics and morality to be found in the Hindu religion itself ? I would content myself by quoting a great Sanskrit Scholar, Prof. Max Muller, who said about Hinduism that in it " we find ethics in the beginning, ethics in the middle, and ethics in the end." Hindu religion and philosophy are based entirely upon the highest standard of ethics and morality. Karsondas desired that his countrymen should aspire to have back the pristine glory of Hindu religion. A reader having read in this book the description of belief cherished by a microscopic portion of the Hindu community would naturally be anxious to know what kind of pure Hinduism it was

which was so eagerly desired by Karsondas to be restored. As properly understood and as originally propounded, Hinduism is not at all hostile to progress among its followers nor does it retard their national evolution.

### TRUE HINDUISM.

I give below a rough sketch of the true and ancient Hindu religion in the words of the late Lala Baijnath :—

“ I do not look upon the fetish worshipping Hinduism of to-day as true Hinduism ; nor do I find any sanction in its earlier and purer sources for many of the degrading customs, many of the unmeaning practices, or many of the gross superstitions that now go under the name of the Hindu religion. The Hindu of the Vedas and the Upanishads looked upon caste as a merely social distinction based upon the possession of certain qualifications. He thought that one may be a Brahman or a Sudra according as he has the qualifications of the one or the other. He was not a worshipper either of stocks and stones or of money. He did not marry in haste to repent at leisure for bringing into the world a weakly offspring. He assigned to his women their proper place in society, saying that where women were honoured there the gods rejoiced. He did not waste his money upon unmeaning ceremonies nor degraded himself by indulging in gross licentiousness. Intoxicating drinks were almost unknown to him. He looked upon dharma (duty) and truth as the two great mainstays of society. His scriptures recognised none but Brahma as the only one from whom the creation, the preservation and the dissolution of the Universe proceeded. That Brahma was the supreme object of his knowledge, which led to supreme bliss and freed him for ever from birth and re-birth in this world of

misery and trouble. Brahma he attained by disinterested performance of duty, doing all for the sake of the Lord; and by constant prayer and meditation till his heart having washed off all its accumulated impurities he was able to realize the truth "I am He." For this he prepared himself by qualifications like these :

The great Elements, Egoism, Intellect, and also the Unmanifested ( Mula Prakriti ), the ten senses and the one (mind), and the five objects of sense; desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the body, intelligence, fortitude,—the Kshetra has been thus briefly described with its modifications.

Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injuriousness, forbearance, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadiness, self-control;

The renunciation of sense-objects, and also absence of egoism; reflection on the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain;

Non-attachment, non-identification of self with son, wife, home, and the rest, and constant even-mindedness in the occurrence of the desirable and the undesirable.

Unswerving devotion to Me by the Yoga of non-separation, resort to sequestered places, distaste for the society of men;

Constant application to spiritual knowledge, understanding the end of the knowledge of Truth; this is declared to be knowledge, because they are the means conducive to knowledge."

#### GUJARATI WOMEN'S DUTY.

Karsondas's greatness lay in the consciousness of an honest purpose he wanted to fulfil, founded on a just estimate of himself and everything else, on

frequent self-examination, and a steady obedience to what he knew to be right, without troubling himself at all about what others might think or say. By his bold stand for Truth and Purity he obliged the whole Hindu community, but specially those who had staunch faith in the Pushti Marga. I must venture to say that so far as the women of the Gujarati community were concerned, they should remain eternally grateful to him because he saved them from the uttermost degradation to which they had been reduced by no other persons but their own spiritual guides. Karsondas knew that Gujarati Hindu women were placed in an unfavourable situation in as much as they were illiterate. that they had no enlightened society, that they lived in a climate which early developed their passions and that they resided in a moral atmosphere unfavourable to purity and delicacy, and to crown all, that their gurus or spiritual guides took undue advantage of their superstitious beliefs. Karsondas opened the eyes of the women of the Gujarati Hindu community and exposed the priests who were instrumental in ruining their morals: hence the yeoman's services that Karsondas rendered to the whole world of Gujarati womanhood by thoroughly exposing the Maharajas' blackest deeds of immorality should alone entitle him to their eternal gratitude. Women of the Gujarati Hindu community should cherish Karsondas's name with intense love and affection, and they should instruct their children that they too may contribute their mite to the thorough success of the cause to which Karsondas devoted the best energies of his short life. Is it too much to expect the whole Gujarati Hindu womanhood to raise a special Gujarati Hindu Women's Memorial in the form of Karsondas's full-sized statue to ever remind them and the future generations

that he was the first Gujarati reformer who considered the defilement of the chastity of the women of his community to be the defilement of the honour of his own wife, mother and daughter. While they should discharge this solemn duty towards their benefactor, they should not forget the name of that good and noble Judge Sir Joseph Arnould, but for whose judgment, the turn of events in the moral regeneration of their community would have very likely been different from what it was at present.

The "Indian Banner" on December 1861 wrote:—

"If a native Guizot were to compile at some future period a work on the "History of Civilisation," we believe the raciest chapter in the book will be that which will treat of "Mr. Karsondas and his persecution."

#### MESSENGER OF TRUTH

Karsondas was the messenger of Truth in the age of shams. He sought truth, truth only, truth for its own sake, independently of all worldly considerations; he was not afraid and did not spare the Maharajas although he recognized them as his spiritual guides; and Truth was his reward—a reward neither measured by length of days nor by any reckoning of men. In his life, religion was not a thing apart, but the pervading spirit and controlling principle of his life, the mainspring of his single-hearted devotion to duty. Religion with him was a spirit that cleaved to the good, and strove against the bad—however that good may be cursed, or that bad consecrated. His faith was simple. He lived as he believed; he practised what he preached. He led a moral life, ceased to visit Vallabhacharya temples, did not believe Maharajas to be gods, only honoured them as his spiritual guides. He

did not even visit the Maharajas as he used to do every Sunday because he came to know that they bore a reputation for impure conduct. He by his own conduct showed his brother and sister votaries of the sect of Vallabhacharya, how the height may be climbed by beginning to ascend it before he began to shout to them to advance. His life was rich in moral excellence and hence he lived worthily and exerted healthy influence during his life over all with whom he came in contact. It was owing to this that he became a power in the Vaishnava society greater than any one could ever be by mere speech alone; and like a practical reformer he knew the master-key of bringing about the reformation of society. He kept the grievances of the Vaishnavas and the immoralities of the Maharajas before the public in season and out of season. He kept his lamp burning so that he might be ready whenever the right time came. He repeated his say times without number, undismayed by indifference, ridicule, contempt, and all the other weapons which the lazy world knows so well how to employ against those who would venture to disturb its peace. His heroism was of a kind which counted the cost, estimated its power and opportunities in view of the grand undertaking he had taken up. It was prepared by careful forethought and wise arrangement for possible crises. It was resolute because righteous, calmly brave, quietly indubitable, and continually courageous. Karsondas had to do his work among the orthodox Vaishnavas who were idolaters of customs and observances, looking behind, not forwards and upwards. Customs are the plagues of wise men and the idols of fools. It is the despotism of customs that is everywhere the greatest hindrance to human advancement. Conventionalism ruled all the Vaishnavas. Almost all

of them were afraid to think for themselves, and the few who dared to do so did not care to act up to their convictions for fear of being thought whimsical. They were afraid to step out into the free air of independent thought and action. They refused to plant themselves upon their instincts, and to vindicate their spiritual freedom. Karsondas was stung by the injustice suffered by his fellow-votaries, and although he fully knew that "freedom has been hunted through the world, and is ever open to insult and injury" and that it is "crushed by conquest, frowned from courts, expelled from colleges scorned out of society, flogged in schools and anathematised in churches" he gave it shelter in his mind because mind was her last asylum, and determined to right the wrong. He was inspired by the noble ideal of reforming his own sect and therefore set his face like flint, against the hypocrisies and immoralities of the sect of the Maharajas, and endeavoured at all cost to bring about its reformation under the high sanctions of enlightened individual conscience. God had planned for his life, had determined what he had to do. He listened to the Divine Voice and followed the directions of God. The demands that were made upon his life were matched to their opportunities which God conferred upon him. The Mission which God intended Karsondas to fulfil was the Mission which He had given to him the possibility to render. There was a most delicate connection between earth's needs and heaven's grace. Days of struggle got more grace than calm, quiet days. When Karsondas met in his life the terrible experiences during the trial of the Maharaj Libel Case, those experiences carried in themselves the light which took away his peril and his terror. The night of sorrow came with

its own light of comfort. God worked through him because, in faith and self-renunciation, he laid himself entirely into His hands, so that His life might flow through him to the lives of other fellow-worshippers whom he was seeking to bless. Karsondas was the chisel with which God carved out the beautiful statue of his memorable life.

### INVINCIBLE SPIRIT.

Karsondas's work of Reformation of the Sect of the Maharajas has immortalized his name as a true Vaishnava Hero. His Hindu brethren and specially his Kapole caste persecuted the body of Karsondas throughout his life, but let us thank God, neither his great community, nor his caste, nor any votary of the Vaishnava sect was able to kill the spirit he had roused by his good influence and illustrious example. That lives on when all his persecutors are dead and forgotten.

To have begun with disapprobation; to have fought through many difficulties; to have announced, and acted on, principles new to the day in which he lived; to have filled several important offices; to have made important speeches, and written several useful books; and in his whole course to have done much with credit, and nothing with dishonour, and so to have sustained and advanced his reputation to the very end, was a mighty commendation in favour of our brave hero.

None of freedom's illustrious dead died in vain. They died that we might live. Karsondas expressed what he honestly thought to be true and changed the Spirit of the Times. The full, frank, free expression which we now enjoy was the precious legacy of a dishonoured past.



Karsondas struggled to free the Vaishnava religion from its superstitious and immoral practices. It is for us the living, to be dedicated in our country to the unfinished work which he by his stern fight had so gloriously advanced. It is for us to dedicate ourselves to the great task remaining before us—that from the honoured dead we took increased devotion to the cause for which he had given the last full measure of devotion—that we should highly resolve that the dead hero had not died in vain.

Let us all labour for the security of free thought, free speech, free press, pure morals, unfulfilled religious schemes and endeavour to the best of our power to hand over the Torch of Reason to the next generation, having added a little to the intensity and glory of the flame so beautifully lighted by Karsondas Mulji seventy-one years ago.

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Karsondas Mulji (Photo taken in England).

## CHAPTER III.

## THE PIONEER GUJARATI HINDU REFORMER

I know of no more hopeful sign for the future of the races of Hindoostan than the existence among them of men like Karsondas Mulli.

SIR BARTLE FREERE.

(Late Governor of Bombay)

Karsondas Mulji, the Hero of the celebrated Maharaj Libel Case, was a Hindu Reformer who had endured most hardships and had laboured intensely for the cause of Reform and was of a type whose equal has not appeared till now.

K. N. KABRAJI. (in 1888)

In Social Reform, Karsondas Mulji was a fighter of the first rank, and his example is one which ought to be followed by all; and his moral courage and his strict observance of Truth is indeed worth emulation.

NAVALRAM LUXMIRAM.

What the revival of letters had done in Europe, the education imparted by the British Government in its schools and colleges was doing in all parts of India at the time when Karsondas was born. India under the supremacy of the British power, was passing through a period of social ferment. While all other foreign influences had caused more or less superficial disturbance in the calm flow of Hindu civilisation, the democratic spirit of Western civilisation was showing in our midst a tendency to invade and perturb the very source of the ancient stream. Karsondas came under the influence of Western thought in relation to all the aspects of Hindus' life, work and aspirations. His heart was touched by the new magic of modern European enlightenment. He and his band of friends, having received the

new education, had to take upon themselves the burden of adjusting the historic life of India and her civilisation to her new environment. They had upon their shoulders the responsibility of adopting that form of life and only those ideals and aspirations which were most conducive to their true progress and enduring happiness. They had to choose either the method of imitation or the method of adaptation. The former method relied too largely on the power of the new enlightenment and the wisdom of the guidance it afforded so that practically no account was taken of the resistance of the social organism which was to be modelled anew; while the latter was a method which believing both in the adequacy of the old civilisation and the utility of the new, steadily endeavoured to mould the old life, so as to make it fully capable of deriving benefit from all that was worthy and noble in the new influences of Western civilisation. It was impossible to preserve the old ideas intact and reject the new ones altogether; nor was it possible to adopt the new ones in their entirety. Any attempt either in the one or in the other of these directions was sure to meet with failure and disappointment. History showed that in every conflict between two civilisations, the result had always been something which was neither the one nor the other, but a harmonious fusion or combination of the adjustable elements of both. Reformers of any kind, be they social, moral or religious, could not alter this issue; but they could, with the help of their wisdom and foresight, clear the obstacles in the way of progress and hasten the attainment of desired harmony. The only way in which society having its own civilisation could be reformed was not to destroy the whole of the social fabric and to rebuild a new one in its place. To do so-

would be suicidal, because the fabric contained many things which were really good, some things which were neither good nor wholesome, and some entirely harmful. The salutary method was to bring out the necessary changes by a process of social evolution. The scientific theory of evolution was nothing more nor less than a statement of the methods by which the world had come to be what it was, and by which humanity climbed up the ages to the summits of civilisation. It was necessary here to clear one misunderstanding about the real significance of this law of social progress. A large number of reformers seemed to suppose that it meant that there was in the world a sort of necessity of progress, whether they or any others did anything about it or not. This engendered and encouraged among them carelessness, both as to accurate knowledge and earnest effort. It was true that the force that underlay the evolution of the world meant a necessity for progress: but it did not mean that all things and everybody should progress. For dissolution, the decay and dying out of forms of life, of individuals, of institutions, of nations, was just as much a part of the process as was their advance. Those social systems, those men, those classes, those nations that were wise enough to discover the laws, the conditions of life, and that were obedient to them,—those alone would live and advance and would perpetuate themselves. Those that failed in this, either through lack of wisdom or lack of obedience, must dwindle and die away. This simple fact, that those systems, men and nations retrograde, dissolve and die out, did not prove that the law of progress did not hold, and was no ground for discouragement as to the diminution of social evils. Indeed, this decay and death were a part of the law of

progress, the very ground for our hope. For our social evils were results of our failure to comply with the laws of true and healthful life.

### LAWS OF LIFE.

The very fact that society existed was proof positive that the conserving forces, the humane force, the good forces of life, health and growth, were in such a majority that they were progressively mastering the evil more and more, developing ever a higher and better order of things. The impelling force that was at work lifting and leading in this onward and upward march of society was God's. Reformers, then, should say freely and fearlessly that God was lifting and leading on in the world. God's methods may not be always such as we would use; he may not be in so much haste as we would be; but it was certain that the process was going on. We could defeat it, so far as we were concerned, that is, if we would; we could break the laws of health, and suffer; we could break the laws of growth and stagnate or we could break the laws of life, and die. We could cooperate with these forces, and have all their might at our back. And, so far as our society is concerned, we may either hinder or help. The good time will come through knowing and obeying the laws of life. There was no other way; there was no patent process. The way to help was plain. The social evils of the world were diminishing. If the process was slow at any rate, it was sure. Such being the case, life had a purpose for all of us and specially for reformers. They should, therefore, work under the inspiration of hope.

The individual aim of life is the salvation of the soul and the communal aim is naturally to fit society for the free and easy realisation of that individual aim. Hence,

the social ideal is the creation of a perfect state of society in which it would be best possible for each man to realise the true end of his being. This idea of individual and social life was the central idea that underlay all the institutions which together constitute the Hindu social organisation and its civilisation, as they had been moulded and shaped by the ancient seers and sages of India.

It was necessary that reformers should attune their lives to their proper conditions. It was their essential duty as reformers to enlighten the people and to purify their social, moral and religious institutions so as to enable them to evolve whatever was the highest in social, moral and spiritual spheres of life along the lines marked out by their national genius. Theirs should be the constant endeavour to create a sound and healthy public opinion in the community to which they belonged, an opinion moulded out of what was best in the literature, philosophy and religion of the East or the West. They should cherish the fundamental belief that whatever threatened the existence of the society, whatever, in the long run and on the whole, diminished the sum of its happiness—this was a social evil; and whatever ministered to its continuance, to its completeness, to its happiness,—that was a social good.

Karsondas, the reformer, based his policy of reform on these fundamental bases. Long before social reformers had, after varied experiences, chalked out the right lines of bringing about reforms, Karsondas, instinctively, as a result of deep thought, had proceeded on such salutary lines, that at this time of the day, one wondered at the clear grasp of social problems that he had. Karsondas recognized the late Raja Ram Mohun Roy as the Father of the Social Reform Movement in India.



With these preliminary remarks, I will narrate different incidents, in the career of Karsondas as a reformer, in details.

#### INBORN TENDENCIES.

It is said the "tasks of the boy foreshadow the occupations of the man." We have seen that from the beginning of Karsondas's career, when he was 21 years of age, he had decided to compete for a prize essay in favour of the remarriage of Hindu widows. He commenced to write the essay secretly; and before he could finish it, the fact of his attempt was found out, with the result that he had to leave his aunt's home, and to bid good-bye once for all to family life. From his very young age, he was residing practically outside his paternal home. This showed that Karsondas, from the beginning, was showing signs of his independent nature, and further that God too wished him, from the beginning, to be outside the sphere of uncongenial influences. God's wish appeared to be to make of Karsondas's life a beautiful poem of service and sacrifice, and therefore the blackness about his early career was just the proper canvas which he gave him to cover with forms of light and music. The very fact that while studying in the college, he thought of writing an essay on the subject of the re-marriage of Hindu widows, showed unmistakably that he had formed in his mind an ideal as to what kind of future life he should lead. This ideal did not consist in having a mere superficial existence, but to have a life of usefulness whereby he might improve the sad lot of his countrymen and countrywomen. The fact that it was the miserable lot of his widowed sisters that drew his attention again throws a vivid light on the high aspirations he must have been cherishing while he was a mere young man. To my mind, this first attempt to write a paper

on the remarriage of Hindu widows showed in true colours, what he was to be as a man. First and foremost, it showed that apart from caring for the improvement of humanity, he chose neither a limited field of family or caste, but a wider field of service—service for his community; secondly, that his main services for his community should be through his pen; and thirdly, that his services should be predominantly for bettering the lot of his unfortunate sisters. All these were ideals in young Karsondas's mind, but at this time, the ideals which he cherished were the actual seeds of future material conditions; they were not bloodless, ineffectual dreams or fancies that came and went and left him where he was. Our real ideals are propulsive and directive. They go over into life and make us what we become. All those ideals cherished by Karsandas in his young age were fulfilled in his later life. If parents were to mark with seeing eyes, the early signs of what their children were going to be, they would find valuable hints as to the lines along which their children should be trained. In the biographical literature, instances of these early indications of the future careers of men and women will be found in large numbers. Let me give here some typical instances. Ferguson's clock carved out of wood and supplied with rudest mechanism; Faraday's tiny electric machine made from a common bottle; Claude Lorraine's pictures in flour and charcoal on the walls of the bakers' shops; Canova's modelling of small images in clay; Chantrey's carving of his school-master's head in a bit of pine wood,—were all indications, clear and strong, of the future man. In the case of Karsondas, his first attempt of writing the essay showed us that he was to lead a future life not of

self-aggrandizement but a life of social service, a life of a social reformer in all walks of life, but specially in the direction of female emancipation. The two mighty works of social service that he carried out in his life, were the protection that he afforded to the chastity of the women of the sect of Vallabhacharya from the unbridled lust of their spiritual guides and his befriending young Hindu widows who had to pass their lives in a miserable condition in their community.

#### POWERFUL INFLUENCES.

My work here is to treat of Karsondas as a Reformer. We have seen the bent of his mind in his young days but it behoves us to see even deeper into the subject by finding out the moulders of Karsondas's young life. In the biographies of great reformers, it is essential that readers should be made acquainted with the counsellors of their conduct, the framers of their aspirations, the trainers of their intuition, the directors of their desires, the partners in their pleasures, the leaders of their leisure hours. This information would be valuable in affording us guidance as to how they came to cherish their noble ideals. The question which arises is whose influences worked on young Karsondas's plastic mind. In Bombay, many years had not passed before a proper system of education had been introduced. It was the good and healthy influence of the professors of the Elphinstone Institution that fired the enthusiasm of their pupils to found societies of students, to read there papers on different social and educational topics and to have debates on those very subjects. These Professors pointed out to their pupils that the founding of students' societies was one of the best ways of increasing their knowledge. A Students' Society was established in connection with the Elphinstone Institution and Prof.

Reid of that institution had taken great pains to encourage the members of that Society. This resulted in the opening of a branch of that Society called the "Gujarati Dnyan Prasarak Mandli". This Mandli was founded for the benefit not of students only but of a wider public, viz., all the Gujarati-knowing public. At this Mandli, lectures by well-known people used to be delivered. Among these lecturers were worthies like Prof. Dadabhai Nowroji, Dr. Bhau Daji and others. The members of this Mandli were mostly Parsis, but the subjects taken up for lectures and debates were not confined to the welfare of that community alone. At that time, Indians, irrespective of their communities, took an active interest in the welfare of the members of all communities. Once, in the year 1853, there was a debate on the subject of the re-marriage of young Hindu Widows. The Secretary of the Mandli, Mr. Edalji Prussia, heard the debate and then decided to have a prize paper on the subject of the debate. He offered a prize of Ra. 150 to the writer of the best paper. It was for this paper, that Karsondas had made an attempt to compete yet was not fortunate in finishing his paper. The Prize was awarded to Kavi Dalpatram Dahyabhai. The essay was got published at Mr. Prussia's expense, but the writer's name was not made known, at his own wish, because at that time, the subject of widow re-marriage was not only not favoured, but was considered tabooed, because the orthodox people held the act of the remarriage of widows to be a great sin. Thus we see that the seeds of reforms were sown in Karsondas's mind by Prof. Reid, and well-known lecturers before the Students' Society and the Gujarati Dayan Prasarak Mandli. Karsondas was

driven out from the home of his aunt; but even before that, the very fact that he was not staying with his father, gave one to understand that from his very young age, Karsondas was a person who did not like to lose his independence, even when it was a question between father and son. When it was a question between himself and his aunt, there too, he showed that spirit of independence. In India, when we study the biographies of great reformers, we always find that these people cherished ideals and dreamt dreams and hence came in open conflict with the orthodox elderly members of their families; and each and every one of them had compulsorily to be away from home influences which were likely to crush their spirits. Karsondas was not a man of the common run. He saw at a glance his peculiar situation. His father and himself were not of one mind, and he had to leave his home. He was a student, and when his aunt commanded him to leave her home, the important question that he had to face was whether he should submit to dictation by his aunt or be driven away homeless to shift for himself. This was the first trial of his life. Only a young man of real stuff could bear a crisis of this kind. On one side, was a servile life of dependence, and on the other, was a life where there was the chance of leading a life of future independence, one, though of hardship and suffering but sure of yielding real benefit to his people. Karsondas was a good reader of useful books. He had read works of Samuel Smiles. He had imbibed high notions both from his study and from his contact with notables, and these taught him that if any one had to do useful service to his countrymen then he must pass through a fiery ordeal of sacrifice and suffering. He nobly chose the narrow and rugged path and thereby

gave further indication that his life was meant by his Maker to be of a widely useful nature. If Karsondas had, in this early life of his, succumbed to his aunt's threats, he would have led a selfish life and would have become rich; but God had not intended him for this kind of selfish life. Karsondas, at this time, showed his real mettle, and sowed the seeds of his future useful career of freedom and independence.

### A NEW FIELD.

At this time, the Hindu members of the Students' Society and members of the Mandli were meeting at Pinjrapole and were discussing among themselves questions of importance. They thought among themselves that in order to be of the greatest help to the Hindu community, it was advisable for them that they should not remain content with the Mandli, because the Mandli, meeting on occasions could not devote as much attention to the welfare of Hindus as their own independent association could do. They, therefore, came to the conclusion of having another Branch of the Students' Society. They founded one in 1851 and named it as the "Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha." The aim and object of the Sabha was to work for the social welfare of the Gujarati and Cutchi Hindus. Karsondas was one of the members of this Sabha. At this time, Karsondas was not well-known. In 1853, he failed to complete his paper on widow re-marriage; but he was not cowed down. He had formed his ideals. He was a man of a studious turn of mind. He had seen his friend Mahipatram going to England; and he himself cherished the ideal of visiting that country. He studied well all the bearings on the subject of foreign travel. In the Sabha, the subject of foreign travel was not discussed at all. He saw that his country was becoming poorer because cheap articles

prepared by machinery were being imported in India and consequently Indian artisans had to remain unemployed. Karsondas thought that it was quite necessary for Indians to go to England for learning different trades and arts, that the prohibition for Hindus to visit foreign countries was wrong to be put into practice for ever, and that to do so any longer was merely a superstition highly detrimental to his country's interests. Karsondas prepared a Paper on the advantages of foreign travel and read the same in a spirited manner, in the presence of a large number of people, among whom were the members of the Sabha as well as many well-known sympathisers from other communities. The Paper, though not a long one, showed that even in his first attempt at writing, Karsondas had succeeded in arranging the theme in well-chosen sub-headings. In this Paper he showed that, in ancient times, Brahmins and Kshatriyas were visiting Persia and Greece, that in modern times Desai Samaldas of Nadiad had followed the ancient example and when he returned he was highly honoured both by his family members and by his countrymen, and that Shravak Banias and Bhattias were going to Mahomedan countries. In it, he further showed the great necessity of Indians going to England for learning modern arts and industries so that India could be made rich by starting industries in the country itself. He concluded his Paper by stating that it was wrong to consider one side of earth to be holy and another side to be unholy. The whole earth, he said, was God's holy ground and to make the Attock river the line of demarcation between the holy and unholy portions was not wise.

This Paper was printed together with the Sabha's secretary's special note wherein it was mentioned that

Shravak Baniyas, Vaishnava Bhattias, Lohanas, Nanakpanthis, Multanis and Saraswat Brahmins went to distant foreign lands and got established there. This was the first step of Karsondas's public career as a reformer. The tongue and the pen were his great instruments of enlightening public opinion; these he wielded well to change people's mentality. In the Sabha, he read his Paper and showed that he could use his pen effectively. The Sabha's very existence helping Karsondas to entertain bold ideas, and affording him an opportunity to read his Paper before a large audience, the way in which his Paper was received, the fact of the Sabha having got his Paper printed in a pamphlet form, the fact that the Secretary of the Sabha endorsed his version with his official note—these were all matters which highly gratified Karsondas's mind and heart. Both his mind and heart aspired to achieve much, and hence the acts of the Sabha mentioned above were the first seeds of encouragement that immensely influenced the budding enthusiasm of our young reformer.

#### SUCCESSFUL TEACHER.

During this period, Karsondas was homeless and had to take his meals at hotels. For some time, on account of the scholarship that he received from the Elphinstone Institution, he pulled through; but ultimately, he had to give up studies unwillingly; but this did not dishearten him. God had created in him longings not without affording him opportunities for realizing the same. Gokuldas Tejpal, a prominent Bhattia Sheth of great influence and refined views, had established in Bombay a Free School for the residents of the Mandvi locality. He noticed Karsondas's ability. After Karsondas's paper on foreign travel, he came to be regarded as a reformer of the first rank. Sheth Gokuldas Tejpal seeing



Karsondas's need and noticing his ability, appointed him the Head Master of that school; and thus God made the work of the future reformer easy. The School proved to be a training ground for young Karsondas, because Karsondas was born to be a teacher not of a school only but of his community. From the rank of a pupil, Karsondas rose to the highest position among teachers to the position of a headmaster. Teaching is one of the greatest arts. It is the noblest profession. A teacher's task like an artist's is creative and far-reaching. His work is spiritual in as much as he moulds the plastic personalities to human perfection by his ability, patience and insight. Such incomparable service demands great skill and devotion. It is a pity that yet the teacher's profession is not valued as it ought to be. It is teachers who sow the seeds of enlightened views of reform in their pupils and it is their influence that makes their pupils to turn out men and women of reformed views in the future. It is difficult to reform deformed minds; it is easy for teachers to mould minds in such a way as not to compel us to reform them. Karsondas was a born instructor of his people. In spite of his never being appointed a teacher before, he succeeded extraordinarily well as a head-master. His work as a head-master was so thorough that it was appreciated by the pupils in the school; and the number students considerably increased. Karsondas's co-teachers caught the contagion of his zeal. The popularity of the head-master satisfied the heart of the Bhattia founder-philanthropist. Karsondas's appointment as a head-master afforded him more time to devote his attention to his cherished plans of reform. If long time had elapsed between Karsondas's dismissal from his aunt's home and his finding good

service, it was likely that Karsondas's zeal would have waned and his country would have lost in him a future great reformer. In Karsondas's life, the financial help, by way of the salary of a head-master that he received, was most timely. Taking merely this help it may be considered quite insignificant, but when we consider that it was in the nick of time, one has to admit, that it greatly helped Karsondas to make up to his mind persist in his career of a reformer.

We have seen Karsondas's leanings for bringing about the emancipation of his countrywomen. Now that the source of independent livelihood was secured, Karsondas desired to be actively useful for the education of girls. In Bombay, the orthodox people were not in favour of giving education to girls; and without proper education of half of Indian humanity, India's regeneration was not possible. "The Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha" had opened a Boys' School in the Bhuleshwar locality, and considering the great importance of female education, had also started two Girls' Schools, one in Fort and the other in another locality. Karsondas and his reformer friends who were staying in Fort looked after the Fort school; and at a later stage, when Sheth Mangaldas Nathoobhai agreed to bear all the expenses of of the Girls' Schools, Karsondas alone looked after the supervision of the Fort school without taking any remuneration. Not only this, but himself staying in Fort, he even looked after the Sabha's Boys' School in the Kalbadevi locality. In all these three schools, Karsondas and his friends were also acting as honorary teachers. During this period, Karsondas was occasionally lecturing before the Sabha. He was also contributing articles on Hindu social reform to the weekly paper 'Rast Goftar.

Thus, even in his very early public career, we find Karsondas discharging the fourfold duties of a teacher of boys and girls, of looking after the welfare of the Sabha's schools, of lecturing in the Sabha's Hall for educating public opinion and of writing useful articles for improving the social status of his community. All these duties he fulfilled simultaneously with those pertaining to his post as the headmaster of the Gokuldas Tejpal Mandvi School. This gives an inkling that Karsondas's mind was bubbling over with noble ideas and ideals as to how best he could reform the decadent state of his Hindu brethren, and shows that his heart was saturated with love and affection towards his own people. His was the divine discontent. He compared the result he was able to achieve with the great desire of his mind and heart and felt himself greatly dissatisfied. He deeply thought over the problem as to how best he could accelerate the speed of progress.

#### HINDU REFORM ORGAN.

Just as the "Gujarati Dnyan Prasarak Mandli" did not satisfy the ambitions of the Gujarati reformers and they started a new institution, so this time, although there was the weekly paper 'Rast Gofar' started with a view to look after the welfare of the Indian population, Karsondas, finding that paper naturally devoting more space to Parsi reforms, conceived the happy idea of bringing out a separate paper, so that it may devote its sole attention to the welfare of the Hindu community in general and of the Gujarati Hindu community in particular. Some Hindu rich men agreed with Karsondas's view. Mr. Mangaldas Nathoobhai generously agreed to meet losses personally if there were any, for a certain period. At this time, Indians

had not developed a taste for reading. A few papers were published but their editors had not the lofty motive of doing good to the Indian population. They had taken up the work of editing, more or less with the mercenary view of earning money. What good could be expected from these editors whose motives were tainted? Contrast this state of things with the worthy motive of Karsondas. His ideal was a high one, viz., to enlighten public opinion regarding the ways and means of improving the society's condition. His object was not to earn through his paper. His friends, having literary talents, consented to contribute articles in his paper without charging anything. Personally, Karsondas decided to edit the paper free of any remuneration whatsoever. In keeping with his truthful nature, he named his paper "Satya Prakash" or "The Light of Truth." Thus was founded in 1855, an instrument which in the hands of Karsondas was to do mighty services to the Gujarati Hindu community in times to come. But for this paper, Karsondas's speeches alone could not have effected much, his writings in the 'Rast Gofar' could not have reached people of his community. We thus see how when God planned the design for some life, He brought about its fulfilment. Karsondas founded the paper in right earnest, and it served very earnestly the cause for which it was started. He wrote spirited articles advising his people to carry out useful reforms such as giving up the custom of contracting debts and then giving feasts to caste people, stopping the harmful practice of spending large sums in marriage, death and pregnancy ceremonies, withholding their charity from able-bodied beggars and able-bodied idle Sadhus and Brahmins, giving up the practice of consulting astrologers, giving

up the harmful practice of calling prostitutes for hearing good music, avoiding the folly of celebrating the 'Holi' festival with singing of indecent songs and having recourse to most mischievous practices, giving up the custom of sitting in half naked condition in dirty places for dinners, giving up singing indecent songs at the time of marriages and at their homes and at temples to please their immoral spiritual guides, and giving up the practice of wasting money in the Vaishnava temples. On these and similar social topics, he wrote reformatory articles in a style peculiar to his own personality. He advanced reasons for his views, he ridiculed people who were practising bad customs; and in this way, he through his pen, assumed a larger and wider scope as an instructor of his people. Once, when the Kapole Baniya ladies, not heeding Karsondas's advice, continued in their shameless practice of singing indecent songs, he like a bold reformer did not hesitate to risk everything by publishing the names of several of them who were habitually doing so. This open disclosure of guilty women created a commotion in the community; and some Kapole gentlemen, very likely the relatives of the ladies whose names were published, tried their best to assault Karsondas and to get him excommunicated from the caste, but they did not meet with any success. In those days of ignorance and superstition, excommunication was the most effective weapon of persecution in the hands of castes and their orthodox leaders. This weapon of excommunication was often flourished against Karsondas, throughout his life; but he, knowing full well what excommunication meant, never cared at all what the consequences of his writings were going to be.

His was a pure soul. He had started his paper with the benevolent intention of bringing about purity of life in the Hindu community; and therefore in his paper, he abided by what was truth, and never hesitated in proclaiming it when the occasion demanded. The Sabha and the 'Satya Prakash' brought Karsondas into limelight. He became a man of status and came to be recognised as a prominent reformer, and as a personality to be counted. From an ordinary member of the Sabha, in 1856 he became a member of its Managing Committee. He occasionally presided at the Sabha's meetings. He was appointed as an examiner of the Fort School of the Sabha. In 1856, the Sabha decided to start a monthly magazine called "Buddhi Vardhak Granth" and Karsondas promised to send for it his contributions, but his work as an editor of his paper left very little time at his disposal for writing often articles for the new magazine.

#### PUBLIC RECOGNITION.

At the end of the year 1856. Mr. T. O. Hope, the Head of the Gujarati Educational Department, being pleased with Karsondas's work at the Gokuldas Tejpal School, appointed him as the Head Master of the Deesa English School on a monthly salary of Rs. 80. On this occasion, the Sabha presented him a Farewell Address. On 2 th December, for the first time in Bombay, a public gathering was called to honour a Gujarati gentleman like Karsondas. At this meeting, Mr. Gangadas Kishoredas presided and he made a suitable speech on the occasion from which I give an important extract showing that till 1857, Karsondas had done his best to carry out in practice his views on social reform. The President said: "The one great want among our people and for which we feel very much ashamed has been

supplied by you, i e., that there was no newspaper among our people and you have boldly started one and in doing this, you have suffered much and you have also incurred losses. You have written much for pointing out to our people their defects, and advising them to give up immoral customs; and this made some foolish persons angry and they wanted to inflict bodily injury on you. Some thought of excommunicating you and made efforts in that direction, but you were not afraid at all. For this bold stand you deserve our congratulations. You have written most properly to open a Fund for the maintenance of the blind and other cripples." Karsondas gave a fit reply and ended his speech by saying: "In conclusion, I pray the Almighty to help my friends and always to render assistance to those who are doing their level best for the good of their country and to see that they perform always such good deeds, make the great works, which they have already undertaken, prosperous; and I also pray God to so help me, that though I may be separated from my friends for a short while, yet, I may always cherish towards them feelings of love and affection as I have at present for them."

Karsondas stayed at Deesa only for ten months in the year 1857. During his absence, he left the work of editing his paper in the charge of his friend Mahipatram. At Deesa, Karsondas's health suffered. He took medicine from a European Doctor, who strongly advised him to take meat with medicine. Karsondas plainly declined to do so because he was a strict vegetarian. He asked for a sick certificate from the Doctor but the latter declined to grant one. Hence Karsondas was forced to leave service. He came to Bombay and recovered. Karsondas was a man of principles. He was a vegetarian by

conviction, and therefore, even for the sake of his health, he did not bid good-bye to his principles. He came to Bombay and was appointed as an Assistant teacher in the Fort School—a Branch of the Elphinstone Institution. The 'Satya Prakash' of 4th January, 1857, in Karsondas's absence, published an editorial article in which it praised his work as reformer by mentioning that in Bombay there were very few Gujaratis of bold spirit who were taking great trouble for doing good deeds for the welfare of their fellow-brethren, and mentioned the instance of Karsondas who suffered monetary loss and had often to sacrifice his health too in the discharge of his public duties.

#### A RESOLUTE "NO".

In the year 1857, Karsondas married for the third time. By this marriage, he got a good opportunity of showing to the people that he was a practical reformer, one who practised what he preached. Orthodox people, not minding whether the marriage of the bridegroom was for the first time or for the third time, invariably followed the same costly and unmeaning ceremonies unbefitting civilised times. During the marriage festivities, orthodox people had the bridegroom decorated with heavy ornaments for some days before marriage.

In order to enter into an agreement for marriage the party of the bridegroom went in a procession to the house of the bride. On the day of the marriage, the bridegroom was obliged to put on gold brocade gown and turban. He was further obliged to paint his eyes with black powder called "Surma" and to ride a horse. On the bridegroom's person, a huge embroidered silk umbrella was held aloft. On the two sides of the horse, menials of the barber caste fanned the bridegroom with big fans.



Costly dinners were given to caste people and to outsiders. In these ways, and by having several other side ceremonies, people incurred a good deal of expense, even by contracting debts. Karsondas had carried on an agitation against all these practices, and now that the time had come to show himself as a practical reformer of the right type, he made up his mind to translate his views into practice. He had an enmity with his caste people on account of his heterodox opinions and on account of the bold views of reform he was preaching in his paper. They instigated the parents of the bride and said that if the marriage was performed as desired by the bridegroom, it would be considered as one celebrated like a widow re-marriage and would bring discredit to the parents of the bride. Karsondas was threatened in various ways. His betrothal was threatened to be broken off. Even a few hours before the wedding, this state of things continued. Karsondas knew that the ceremonies which the bride's party wanted to be performed were not enjoined by the Hindu Shastras, that in the moffusil, bridegrooms went to marry walking and that unless there were very strong reasons, people could not break off betrothals. He, therefore, did not yield an inch. He gave up all unmeaning and unnecessary ceremonies. The whole function was performed with the utmost simplicity. The usual ceremony of going to the bride's house in a procession for the purpose of entering into an agreement was dropped altogether. He dropped the idea of inviting many people to dine at his house, although it was sure to be considered in his community as a disgraceful action. He invited only a handful of people to dine. This praiseworthy conduct of the young Baniya, Karsondas, was praised publicly on 6th

December 1857, in the "Rast Goftar" as befitting a true reformer and he was highly congratulated. This little incident ought not to be considered to be without its own significance. It showed clearly that Karsondas was a reformer who never preached practices which he in his own case was not willing to practise, when proper occasions arose.

### THE "SLAVERY BOND",

At the time the paper was founded, the famous "Chhapan Bhog" controversy arose; and it gave proper and sufficient food to the editor of the 'Satya Prakash.' He utilised the golden opportunity in writing with vigour against the immoral, unreasoning, and superstitious practices of the Maharajas of the Vallabhacharya sect. The 'Satya Prakash' was a cheap, weekly newspaper, and it had established its reputation befitting its good title. People, therefore, read articles appearing in it with great eagerness, with the happy result that the number of its subscribers increased beyond the expectation of the founder. Karsondas, from the commencement of the paper down till its separate existence, discharged his duties ably and conscientiously. When we contrast the editor of the "Chabook" with the editor of 'Satya Prakash', then we come to appreciate truly Karsondas's worth and value. All sorts of temptations were placed before this Editor of poor means but a like a true and faithful man, he did not succumb. He did not barter away his soul for a mess of pottage, and thereby showed in an unmistakeable way, that he was a man of thorough integrity. We have seen how in the "Slavery Bond" one of the clauses pertaining to excommunication was directly aimed at

Karsondas. At that time, the full authority of the Maharajas was used to get the Bond signed. The Maharajas, for full one week, had closed the temples to bring the Vaishnavas to obey them and to sign the Bond. Ladies, ignorant and illiterate as they were, used their undue influence over the male members of their families ; and this policy of coercion was utilised to such a great extent that the Bond was signed by rich Shethias, Justices of the Peace, and members of the Grand Jury. Karsondas, at this critical moment of his life, remained firm and steady.

Although overwhelming odds were against him, still the Baniya reformer showed the true spirit of a brave Kshatriya. He was undeterred by the fear of the sword of excommunication hanging over his head. He deeply thought over the whole question and surveyed all its aspects and finally decided to stick to his purpose, and this he did for the reason that if the Vaishnavas were allowed to have their sway, other Hindu communities would follow suit and the chances of reforming the immoral conduct of the priests would be gone for ever. For the good of the wives and daughters of his community, for the purification of the sect to which he belonged, for the good name of his country he loved, he cared not at all for any untoward consequences, but boldly stepped forward in the arena like a brave warrior. In the next issue of the 'Satya Prakash,' he mercilessly exposed each and every clause of the Bond, expressed his right wrath at the slavish mentality of the rich men of his community who had signed the Bond. He even issued handbills by thousands, thoroughly exposing the outrageous terms of the Bond. He offered two prizes for the best essays

on the subjects of the Bond and the Authority of the Maharajas. In this fight for purity, he was helped by several friends, but among them there were many who did not like openly to help, and there were only a few choice spirits who for the sake of principle boldly and fearlessly supported Karsondas. This great agitation highly enhanced Karsondas's reputation as a valiant reformer. While he was editing his own paper, he was also writing for "Stri Bodh," "Buddhi Vardhak" and "Dnyan Prasarak." Karsondas used his pen in the sacred cause of reform through various papers and periodicals although he never enjoyed robust health and had to work for his daily bread. He was a reformer who loved his country deeply and genuinely, and his deep concern for the regeneration of his countrymen was so acute and deep-seated, that he welcomed even the help of spiritual guides, proving himself thereby as an apt utilitarian, always seeking, nay creating, preparatory opportunities for furthering the attainment of his object.

### DISCRIMINATING OPPOSITION.

When Jadunathji Maharaj came to Bombay, Karsondas and his reformer friends, knowing that Jadunathji had founded a Girls' School invited him to preside at the prize distribution ceremony of Seth Mangaldas Nathoochak Girls' school, fully believing that this step would hasten the progress of female education in the Hindu community. Karsondas's method of effecting reforms was by using loving means. He was using in all his writings very chaste language and was pointing out faults and errors of his adversaries not in a spirit of dictatorial authority but in a spirit of gentleness and affection. He had no quarrels with individuals. He hated the vices of individuals, but

had no personal grudge and bore no malice against them. He was a reformer who used the method of choosing the good points of opponents and leaving aside their bad ones. Further, he was a reformer who never considered it demeaning to himself to admit his own faults and mistakes. In the 'Satya Prakash' of the 18th November 1861, he wrote: "Of all the Maharajas who are known to us, Shri Jadunathji Maharaj has been found to be the most courageous and the most discriminating. Without regard to the unjust means, the said Maharaja has latterly adopted to injure us, we must say that by a public approval of female education, the Maharaja has rendered himself worthy of no little respect. Had not the poet Narmadashanker erred, and had he not plunged him into the remarriage controversy, we should this day have seen the Maharaja advancing in, instead of retiring from, the field of reform. But often times slight incidents prove unfavourable. The same is the case now, and we are really sorry for it." The stand that Narmadashanker had taken, though right, was somewhat too hasty. Narmadashanker believed that Jadunathji was in favour of widow re-marriage and if he was challenged and satisfied that the Hindu Shastras permitted this reform, he would gladly join the fold of reformers. Jadunathji, in the Maharaja Libel Case, gave the following evidence. I give here only that much portion which is useful for our purpose:—"I convened a meeting to discuss the question of widow remarriage; in consequence of a note addressed to me by Narmadashanker, I attended the meeting, but expressed no opinion on remarriage, because other irrelevant subjects were mooted for discussion and were discussed. The subject of remarriage was not discussed. I said some Shastras

must be fixed upon as an authority upon the subject of remarriage. Narmadashanker said the Shastras may be followed when advisable, or not. I said we must acknowledge all the Shastras; and my opinion was that, if the Shastras allowed, remarriages might take place, but not otherwise. I have seen no authority in the Shastras for remarriages. But I have no objection personally thereto. In my sect, remarriages take place, and I don't prohibit them."

#### SELF-EFFACEMENT.

Karsondas was a level-headed reformer. His success at the Maharaja Libel Case did not puff him up at all; nor the fact that he was not honoured by the general public in a way befitting his great victory, made him sorry. He publicly owned his success not as his personal success but the success of the cause of Truth and Purity for which he had fought. He was a reformer who wrote not in a haphazard manner. He wrote only after he was satisfied about the facts of which he was writing, and this was done because his was the purest object of effecting reforms in his country and community. He was not fond of personal glory. At Limree, the residents of the place called "Pachham", which was under the jurisdiction of Limree, raised a special fund for a Library in honour of Karsondas and asked Karsondas's permission to name the Library as "Karsondas Library." Karsondas did not comply with their wishes, thanked them for the offer, and advised the subscribers to name it as "Native Library." He and his friends while carrying on in the Press a vehement agitation against the Maharajas were all the same trying privately to bring about their reformation. Karsondas hated the Maharajas;

debauchery but that did not make him give up honouring Maharajas as his spiritual guides. He was not a vindictive reformer. In the Bhattia Conspiracy Case, he asked for mercy for the convicted rich persons. After the Maharaja Libel Case, he did not prosecute Jadunathji for perjury. He did not appeal. He had no personal grudge against Jadunathji. He had hatred of immorality and that too in the persons of spiritual guides, who ought to be purity personified. In this object, in the Maharaja Libel Case he succeeded and that sufficed for him; and for that very purpose he did not file an appeal in the Queen's Council.

#### FIGHT AGAINST ODDS.

At the time when the Case was heard, his life was in great danger. This did not at all unnerve him. He fearlessly stuck to the right path, come what might. Before and during the trial of the Case, he was offered most tempting bribes but he contemptuously rejected them all. He was fully aware of the weak position of the reformers. All told at that time there were in the city of Bombay, not more than two hundred men of somewhat reformed views, and among those there were only fifty Baniyas; and Karsondas's whole life showed that even among those fifty not a single one stood faithful and firm till the last. This brought out Karsondas's greatest merit so far as the Baniya community was concerned. At the Police Court, when Karsondas filed a complaint about Conspiracy, Bhattias had assaulted Karsondas; and at the High Court, during the trial of the Libel Case, Baniyas assaulted and abused Sheth Lakmidas Khimji, a true and sincere Bhattia friend of Karsondas. This shows that at the time of the Libel Case, the two most prominent communities of Bhattias

and Banlyas were dead against reforms; and yet in this hostile environment arose Karsondas to fight people's battle for freedom and independence. It appears that from the fifteenth year of his life, Karsondas had become a reformer. It further appears that since that time Karsondas's father had regretted his son's conduct. Even when the son was not staying with the father, the father used to visit his son several times, and during these stray visits, he advised his rebel son that the path he was pursuing was not a right path and that therefore it behoved him to sever altogether his connection with the reformers and to cease treading any longer the path of reform. Karsondas's father regretted that by his son's disobedient conduct, the family reputation was on the point of being completely wiped out and feared that if the son persisted in his wayward manner, it would be irrevocably lost for ever. Karsondas was a dutiful son. He mildly told his father that what he was doing was only work of a philanthropist, that his work was of a kind which was sure to increase the reputation of the family among good and righteous people, that his work of reform was such as to stop the immoralities and to increase the spread of morality and establish right religious worship.

#### A WELCOME OFFER.

Having achieved one victory in the field of social reform, Karsondas thought of winning more laurels. In 1853, he had read before the "Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha" a Paper on Foreign Travel. Since that time, knowing that England was accorded the first place among the countries of the world for its reforms, independence and skill in arts, that it was famous for its trade, industry, wealth and strength, that it ruled over a prosperous, fertile



and wide country like India, Karsondas had thought of visiting that land personally. After the Maharaja Libel Case, Karsondas got a grand opportunity of fulfilling his long cherished wish. He and Sheth Karsondas Madhavdas were good friends. Karsondas Madhavdas had decided to send Mr. Ramchundra Balcrushna to England for the purpose of opening a firm in England; and he offered exceptionally tempting terms to Karsondas so that he may be induced to visit that country, and get an opportunity of enlarging his mind and of getting more experience so that his future career as a reformer might prove of immense benefit to his people. It appeared that Karsondas's visit to England was not with a view to make money. He had taken English education for two and a half years at a College. He had read good English books and personally experienced that under the civilised and beneficent rule of England, Indians were reaping many benefits. Karsondas knew full well that on his return, he would be excommunicated both from his caste and from the larger Mahajan. For this purpose, he and his friend Sheth Karsondas Madhavdas had made an arrangement between themselves whereby Sheth Karsondas, a rich Visa Nagar Baniya, a very prominent citizen of Bombay and a well-known member of the "Buddhi Vardhak Sabha," gave his friend Karsondas a written undertaking as follows on 12th March 1863, a day previous to Karsondas's sailing for England: "I will dine with you openly on your return from England and will assist you as far as it lies in my power to get you out of caste difficulties." On 11th March, Khoja reformers presented to Karsondas an Address of Farewell and a purse of Rs. 1,000. On 12th March, the editors of Vernacular papers and periodicals, and the "Buddhi

Vardhak Sabha " presented him Addresses. There were two other public meetings in his honour, where he was presented a purse of Rs. 8,000 for the use of his family members. These parties, these addresses, and the presentation of purses all go to testify that during Karsondas's lifetime, the services that he had rendered to his society were well appreciated by his countrymen, and among those, by his countrymen belonging to communities other than his own. A large number of people of different communities went to the Bunder to wish *Bon Voyage* to Karsondas on 13th March 1863. He had taken with him one Baniya clerk named Parbhudas. At first he had intended to stay in England for full two years. When he went to England, he was not keeping quite good health. He was suffering from lung trouble, and while he was in England, doctors advised him to leave England before the commencement of winter. While staying in England, doctors advised him that he should take animal food, but he flatly declined to take it on any ground whatsoever. He returned at the end of September to India. His stay in England considerably improved his health. When he returned to Bombay, he did not receive public honour, and this fact is not surprising, because at that time, people were very orthodox, were entirely steeped in ignorance and were quite superstitious. Amidst such a population, Karsondas's value as a reformer got considerably increased. During Karsondas's time, almost the whole of the Baniya Community was under the tyrannical sway of their headmen or Sheths of the caste, and these again were under the domination of their immoral and illiterate spiritual preceptors. To cross the "Kala Pani" (black waters) was considered to be a highly sinful act. On Karsondas's return, reformers as a body

also failed in their duty of publicly honouring their brave-spirited colleague. Some reformer friends, who had promised to dine openly with Karsondas, turned out to be false friends and hypocrite reformers. Only two brave souls kept their word and they were Sheth Karsondas Madhavdas, a rich Nagar Baniya, and Mr. Pranjiwandas Waghji, a middle-class Kapole Baniya. Both of them dined openly with Karsondas. Mr. Pranjiwandas Waghji was the husband of Sheth Mangaldas Nathubhai's sister. When Sheth Mangaldas came to know of this, he stopped all social intercourse with the whole family of Pranjiwandas and this step taken by an enlightened gentleman like Sheth Mangaldas, made the Kapole caste excommunicate Pranjiwandas and his whole family. For three years, the whole family pulled on; but ultimately Pranjiwandas found the punishment so galling that he had to ask apology of the caste. The caste inflicted the punishment of paying a fine, of going on a pilgrimage and also of performing with the whole family the "Prayschit" ceremony whereby Pranjiwandas and his sons had to get their moustaches and their heads clean shaved. It was only after this, that the family was readmitted into the fold of the Kapole caste. Sheth Mangaldas had founded a scholarship for the benefit of Hindu students wishing to go to foreign countries, and this very Sheth when his own relative dined openly with an England-returned Kapole Baniya, gave him the same punishment of excommunication, as one meted out to an England-returned gentleman. A humorous Gujarati paper, criticising this conduct of Sheth Mangaldas, wrote a couplet in joke as follows: "Establishing a scholarship for making people to go to England; and cutting the throat of those very persons when they return from foreign voyage."

## MAHAJAN'S TYRANNY.

For the act of rebellion on the part of Karsondas Madhavdas, the Kapole Seths tried their best to get him excommunicated from the Nagar Baniya community, but Karsondas being then in a most prosperous condition and being also closely related to the well-known rich family of Kalliandas Kirparam, the Kapole Sheths failed in achieving their object. They, therefore, ingeniously hit upon the plan of excommunicating the whole of the Nagar Baniya community from the fold of the Baniya Mahajan. In the history of the Baniya Mahajan, never has occurred an instance of a whole caste being excommunicated for the fault of one individual, and that fault being not of having travelled to foreign countries but that of dining openly with an England-returned Kapole, Karsondas Mulji. The whole Nagar Baniya community, bravely to a man, remained loyal to Karsondas Madhavdas, because he was in such a prosperous state that he was able to keep his whole caste remain contented; but when, in the share mania, he met with monetary disaster, his caste people proved unfaithful and submitted to undergo any punishment the Mahajan Sheths may order as the price of re-admission in the Mahajan. The price exacted by the Mahajan Sheth was that the whole Nagar Baniya community—men, women and children—should go to the sacred place of Banganga, Walkeshwar, and there perform the 'Prayschit' ceremony with the usual customary rites attached to it, viz., taking of cow's night soil and drinking of cow's urine and every adult male getting his moustaches shaved, every boy getting his head shaved, and every woman bathing in the sacred waters of Banganga. Even the brave Karsondas Madhavdas had to submit to this fate before he was

re-admitted in the Mahajan. I believe, this harsh punishment, meted out to a whole caste as the price for its being re-admitted to the fold of the Mahajan, has been the last instance which has occurred in the history of the whole Baniya community. I have specially given these details in order to show in lurid light that the act of Karsondas Mulji's going to England, was not an ordinary act of adventure, but a highly meritorious act of pioneer reform. When Karsondas was in England, at that time there were in England only 12 Hindus. From Bombay, he was the first Hindu to go there, and from the whole of India, he was the first Baniya to go to a foreign country. During his times, there were only two Hindu communities, viz., Rajputs and Prabhus, who were freely allowing members of their communities to go to foreign countries. On 11th April 1864, Sir Bartle Frere, the then Governor of Bombay, speaking at the Convocation of the Bombay University, observed as follows:—

“It may be necessary to wait with patience till the prejudices which prevent the gratification of this most natural and wholesome form of education shall be counted among the things of the past; but it would be an insult to the intellect of India at this period, to suppose that many years can elapse before men will think with something like incredulity, that it was ever seriously contemplated to treat as outcastes men who had sought to improve their minds by foreign travel.”

In Bombay, the Jain Seth Virchand Deepchand and other Shravaks dined with Karsondas; and at Ahmedabad, Karsondas's friend, Kavi Dalpatram Dahyabhai, invited him to dine at his place after his return from England. For the bold step of Karsondas, he and

his whole family were ex-communicated both from their own Kapole caste and also from the whole of the Baniya Mahjan. During Karsondas's time, the punishment of excommunication was the highest penalty in the hands of ignorant castemen and their headmen for crushing the independent spirit of any and every reformer whatsoever. It is easy to suppose as some do, that Karsondas, if he had remained in caste, he would have been able to carry out reforms on a larger scale. Even if there had been no enmity between his caste and himself, still, on his return from England, he would have been excommunicated all the same. His work in the Maharaja Libel Case had no connection whatsoever with his excommunication. It was good that Karsondas realized his longed-for wish to go to England. He was cherishing this idea since some years; and he gladly took the opportunity of proving that he was a reformer who not only preached but practised also.

Chance will not do the work, Chance sends the breeze ;  
 But if the pilot slumbers at the helm,  
 The very wind that wafts us towards the port  
 May dash us on the shelves. The Steerman's part  
 Is vigilance, blow it rough or smooth.

Karsondas had before him the example of the first of Indian reformers, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who braving all the obloquy of the people had undertaken foreign voyage. This example inspired Karsondas to incur the odium of his people. Writing about the Raja, Karsondas wrote as follows :

"When Hindus came to learn that Raja Ram Mohan Roy was to visit the land of 'Mlechhas', they felt a

consternation. People being unable to think of the philanthropic nature and the thirst for knowledge of the Raja, spread false rumours about his motives for doing so and commenced to speak ill of him; but was there any likelihood of their preventing the Raja from translating his determination into action? The Raja was one who had dared to protest against people's 'zulum' at all hazards, who had succeeded in surmounting obstacles that threatened to disappoint him in crowning his efforts with success, who had succeeded in winning a victory by fighting against the 'Dharma Sabha', and who had treated with contempt the calumnies and curses of Brahmins."

Karsondas had also before him, the example of his friend Mahipatram Ruparam and the hardships he had to endure at the hands of his caste brethren. We thus see that Karsondas had gone to England not to make money, but with a view to both earning his livelihood and of learning much by coming in contact with the inhabitants of a civilised country, so that he may be enabled to do good to his fellow-countrymen. I think, it was this visit of his to foreign lands, that made him eager not to be satisfied with mere lip-sympathy for the woes of Hindu widows. I am firmly of opinion that this visit to a civilised country and his consequent excommunication made Karsondas's path of reform quite smooth. In comparison with the reform of foreign travel, the great reform of bringing about the first Baniya widow remarriage was a much important step, and I do not think it is proper to criticise Karsondas for his visit to England. The different events of his whole life are so inter-twined and following in such a beautiful sequence that one has to believe that his life incidents were so arranged that when we

look at one incident after another, we come to believe that the whole arrangement was divinely appointed. Karsondas, in his book of Travels, refers to his caste-brethren desiring to take revenge on him as follows :—

“I am sitting in this garden (Chrystal Palace Garden) and am gazing with rapt attention the Palace. Opposite to me the fountain is gaily playing. At this time, several joyful sentiments arose in my mind and I spoke as follows : Oh ! What a fortunate Baniya I am that I am sitting at this place. Those who cherish sentiments of revenge against me must be thinking of harassing me about my travels to foreign countries, to them I tell only this much—that the happiness I derive, when I remember the feeling of contentment I had when I was in the Garden, you shall never be able to deprive me of the same.”

Karsondas was a reformer even before he went to England ; and if he had lived long, his success in the field of reform would have been more signal. After his excommunication both from his caste and the Mahajan, he bore his sufferings quite manfully. He never complained about his lot. To remain excommunicated for carrying into effect a pioneer reform like foreign travel, was considered by him to be a pious act. He considered his visit to England as his pilgrimage to a sacred land and was of opinion that so long as Indians did not travel in civilised countries, their counrty would never rise. He also expressed the following opinion showing how much he valued foreign travel for bringing about salutary reforms in his community :—

“I have very little doubt that all the social defects about which we frequently complain loudly will only



vanish by our coming more and more into contact with civilized people."

He addressed his timid reformer friends as follows regarding the reform of foreign travel :—

"The time has not come" plea may serve its purpose in the question of some reform, but will not do as regards foreign travel. With regard to this item, fear more than superstition comes in our way. Therefore drive out that fear and boldly step forth."

Karsondas, while he was in England, utilized a portion of his time in gathering materials for writing a book on his Travels. This book is worth studying, so much so that Sheth Varjiwandas, who considered even drinking water at Karsondas's hands to be pollution, subscribed for a few copies of it. In this book, Karsondas frankly gave out his views on several reforms which India ought to carry out. In it he pointed out the defects and virtues both of Indians and Englishmen, and describing the good qualities of Englishmen wished his countrymen to follow the same.

#### WIFE AS HANDICAP.

An English author draws the following pen-picture of a happy couple not from fancy but from real life : "Nothing is such an incentive to a man to make the best of himself as the knowledge that there is some one in the world who believes he is just the cleverest fellow alive : that there are eyes, far lovelier than all the stars in heaven to him, which sparkle at his coming ; that there is a loving, womanly heart which beats quicker at the sound of his footsteps ; that there is a nature ever ready to sympathise with him in his troubles and gladden at his

victories—a dear, sweet, loving woman, who laughs with him, and puts her soft, loving arms around him when he is in trouble, rouses him to his better self, making him feel that, after all, this world is not such a bad place to live in." I put in this discription to contrast it with the picture of Karsondas and his wife. After his return from England, finding that his wife, owing to he and his whole family being excommunicated both from the Kapole caste and from the Bania Mahajan, was bitterly complaining, Karsondas found this state of things in his home life irksome. We find an inkling of this sad state in a line in his letter written nearly a month before his death to his friend and adviser Sheth Sorabji Shapurji Bengali, where he says: "Mrs. K. is little better both in temper and in health; and all the children are doing well." Another revered friend of Karsondas wrote as follows: "His wife had not the capacity to understand the greatness of her husband. If somebody came to see Karsondas and talked with him about caste matters, his wife overhearing the conversation felt much agitated in her mind and this frequently gave rise to needless quarrels. On any pretext she cried, taunted, remained grief-stricken, showed all kinds of fears; in short, she harassed her husband in many different ways. On one occasion, Karsondas when talking about this matter, being overpowered with feelings of sorrow, had been noticed by us to give vent to them in shedding tears." We thus see that Karsondas was unhappy because he had not the good fortune of having an accomplished wife. His wife was a drag on all his public activities; yet the wonder is that in spite of trouble at home, he was able to accomplish so much. After his excommunication, he thought it advisable to go to moffusil;

and this step of his was a wise one. This will appear from what is stated later on in connection with Karsondas's activities both at Rajkot and at Limree. At these places, there was no caste trouble. There Karsondas and his family were admitted in the community without any hitch; and hence Karsondas's wife remained in a much more peaceful mood and allowed Karsondas mental peace and rest to carry out all his ideas of reform. During the few years that he passed at both these places, the amount of reform that he carried out, may not fitly be compared with Karsondas's great works, but looking to the great volume of good that he was able to effect, one may unhesitatingly say that this was due to the peaceful state of his mind.

Some one has asserted that at a later stage of his life, Karsondas found out that the step he took in going to England was a wrong one. I do not see any authority for this assertion. Before Karsondas went to England, the written agreement he made with Karsondas Madhavdas showed that he was fully aware of the hardships he would have to undergo on his return. Even in England, he had not lost sight of the treatment that he would receive at the hands of his caste brethren. Mahipatram has said in Karsondas's biography:—"I never found him (Karsondas) dejected and repining for being out of caste." "Karsondas himself was not a person who would run away by being afraid of caste." At several places in his book on Travels, Karsondas has alluded to the necessity of remaining independent from the trammels of caste. Like Karsondas, his clerk Parbhudas was also ex-communicated by his caste and remained ex-communicated throughout his life; and it was only when he was dead,

that his caste brethren showed their humanity by taking his body to the cremation ground. On behalf of the Shrivak community, Karsondas was again requested to go to England to bring about a settlement of the chronic dispute between the community and the Thakore Saheb of Palitana. Before he went to England, he toured through the whole of Kathiawar and remained for full one month at Rajkot. Karsondas had a habit of doing anything he undertook in a thorough manner. At this time, he minutely observed all things himself, and was so well prepared, that on 25th June 1866, he delivered a lecture before the "Vidya Gun Prakashak Sabha" on the subject of "What reforms are necessary for improving Kathiawar?" This showed that his ideas of reform were not confined to British India but also included the good of the subjects of Native States. Karsondas's second visit to England was at the end of March 1867. He took with him one Modh Baniya, Maneklal Jugjiwandas. This time too, Karsondas was not able to stay for a long time. He returned to India before winter. On his return, on 20th December 1867, he was appointed as an Assistant Superintendent at Rajkot. While there, he founded new schools at important places in the State and got buildings built for them. He made arrangements for dealing out speedy and impartial justice to the subjects without offering any bribes or gifts. He wrote occasionally to the magazine called "Vijnan Vilas" which was newly started in 1868. He delivered some lectures in the "Vidya Gun Prasarak Sabha" of which he was a member. On 28th April 1868, before a distinguished audience of Rajas and their administrators, he delivered an important lecture on the subject of "Reforms necessary to be introduced in the Native-

States of Kathiawar." He was the president of the Committee of the Girls' School there. He was a reformer of very amiable manners. This good trait of his made his own and his family's relations with the Jains and Baniyas of Rajkot very cordial. These Baniyas, unlike the Kapole Baniyas of Bombay and the Mahajan there, admitted Karsondas and his family to the Mahajan without any difficulty. Karsondas was invited to dine both at individual Baniyas' houses and at caste gatherings. Karsondas, on his part too, used to invite some of these Baniyas for dinners at his own place. He was always giving proper advice on different useful topics to people who were coming in contact with him. He himself was a teetotaler and therefore was advising people to give up the unhealthy habit of taking intoxicating drinks. He was also against the adulterous practices. During the minority of the Thakore Karsondas, though only a teacher, an author and a journalist, astonished the rulers of Kathiawar by discharging his duties conscientiously as an administrator at Rajkot for nearly two and a half years. He satisfied all parties, and this in itself was a highly creditable certificate for the good work done by Karsondas. At Rajkot, side by side with his administrative duties, he propagated his ideas of reform.

While discharging his state duties Karsondas never gave up his studies; he found time during his leisure to write the prefaces of two books: "Pakhund Dharma Natak" and "Sansar Sukh" and got these two books published. The first work related to the exposure of the immoralities of the Maharajas and the latter was a collection of articles he had contributed for the welfare of women in the monthly periodical called "Stri Bodh." In

May, 1870, he was appointed to the post of Special Assistant, in charge Limree, on a montly salary of Rs. 500. Before he left Rajkot he received several Addresses from the people and one from the Durbar Lady.

### RAJKOT CITIZENS' GRATITUDE.

I give below important extracts from the Address presented to Karsondas on 10th May 1870 by 125 leading citizens of Rajkot, showing how much good in various directions he did to the residents there,—

“Within a short period of two and a half years of your regime, you have carried out such new reforms in Municipality, Educational Department, Judicial Department, Police and Gaol Departments that people of this place who have not seen other provinces had never expected the same to be realized so soon. This shows your capacity. Within this short period, you have got erected a Dharmshala for travellers, a Gaol for convicts, Barracks for soldiers, and model school buidings. You have founded a Library for the Girls' School and therein many of the English, Gujarati and Marathi papers, periodicals and books have been supplied by you enthusiastically at your own expense. You have by incurring great expense got big and beautiful grain and vegetable markets built in the city as well as in the camp. You have got the roads enlarged, and new shops built on a uniform pattern and got both the lines of roads well illuminated at night by kerosene oil lams put up on beautiful pillars and this has adorned the whole city to such an extent that people of other places in Kathiawar have commenced to imitate Rajkot.....You have also taken steps to ameliorate the moral and mental condition of the people of Rajkot.....You have so encouraged trade of the

moving all rules and regulations which were against the place by reelementary principles of political economy, by improving roads in a way as to suit merchants and by making necessary changes in the tariff and customs levied on the merchandise of the people, that our place has become prosperous. Your conduct in judicial matters is no less praiseworthy.....In matters of justice, you have shown a calm disposition, you have conducted enquiries minutely and patiently, you have got good knowledge of law, you have paid proper attention to our Indian customs and usages. You have treated all persons on an equal footing, you have dispensed justice with mercy and in all cases you have observed a detached impersonal attitude. For all these traits parties got rarely dissatisfied, and this is a sufficient proof of your impartial justice. This has resulted in making our city prosperous. In spite of the city being kept sanitarily clean, its roads neat and well-watered, last year cholera attacked the place, and then you speedily took all proper precautionary measures and at once commenced to supply people with necessary medicine and took such speedy action, that before the fell disease could exact its large toll it retreated and since then the city has presented a clean health record. You have in your regime so acted as to become popular both among the rulers and the ruled.....”

At Limree too, he took great interest in effecting reforms in various directions. On 26th June, 1870, he was appointed an Honorary Patron of the Rajkot Library. To this Library he presented a large number of books. He used to give his newspapers to the Library for daily use. He delivered useful lectures on social and literary topics. On 15th January 1870, he delivered a lecture on “The great value of, Libraries in India.” He was

always dispensing impartial justice to the subjects. Karsondas passed his leisure time in pursuits meant for the welfare of his people. In November, 1870 he wrote the preface of the book "Nibandha-Mala." At Limree too, the Vaishnav and Shrivak Baniyas admitted Karsondas and his family to their caste without any hitch.

Karsondas and his brother reformers were of opinion that the Hindu Shastras permitted widow-remarriages and that it was unjust on the part of Brahmins, Baniyas, and other high castes who were prohibiting such remarriages and that such prohibition resulted in abortions and immorality.

#### FIRST BANIYA WIDOW REMARRIAGE.

While Karsondas was serving at Limree, as Special Assistant, he received a letter from his friend, Sheth Madhavdas Rughnathdas, informing him about the death of his wife. Karsondas wrote a letter of condolence to his friend advising him to marry a virgin. Madhavdas wrote in reply that he was not thinking of marriage, but if he at all resolved upon doing so, he would like to marry a widow of some respectable family. In 1871, Karsondas Mulji had to come to Bombay for some state purpose. On 30th March, 1871, Madhavdas gave an advertisement that a respectable Kapole gentleman was willing to marry a widow of the age of 15 to 30 years belonging to a respectable family, and that the person who would bring about this marriage would be rewarded with a prize of Rs. 500. Among the castes of Bhansalis, Bhavsars, Kanbis, Kumbhars and Sutaras, widow re-marriages were allowed; but among the so-called higher castes, the re-marriage of a widow was considered to be an act of great sin. After this advertisement, Sheth Mangaldas Nathoobhai,



a very rich and influential Kapole Bania, called his friend Madhavdas to his place and advised him not to take this hazardous step. He asked Madhavdas not to advertise again and mentioned that to bring about a widow re-marriage would still take fifty years more. Dhankorebai was willing to re-marry; but before she finally decided to do so, she consulted several people. In the first place, she talked about the matter in an indirect manner with her own mother. She told her how several widows were leading immoral lives, and how their relatives took them to some places of pilgrimage for bringing about abortions. She then put to her mother a direct question: "In our caste, there are rich widows who lead immoral lives. Instead of this, how better it would be if they were to marry?" The mother replied: "Yes, it would be really nice if they were to act in that way; but so long as the old Shethias in our caste are living, it is not possible that such a system of widow remarriage will come into vogue." Dhankore, among others, consulted one distant lady relation of Shet Varjiwandas Madhavdas. This intelligent and wise lady of mature age, gave her opinion in favour of re-marriage, but said: "What can we do, when widows do not marry in this way." Both Madhavdas and Dhankore agreed to re-marry. Dhankore was a niece of Sheth Varjiwandas Madhavdas and a daughter of Girdhardas Mohandas. She was married, while very young by her mother and uncles, to a young man Lakhmidas Dharamsi. This boy was of a bad character; once he had committed theft and with difficulty his release was brought about. The boy died when very young. Madhavdas Raghunathdas was a respectable Kapole Baniya dealing in Chinese and Japanese cloth in his shop in the Fort locality. He was

Karsondas's friend and was a constant reader of both "Satya Prakash" and "Rast Goftar"; and the writings in these two papers had considerably influenced his views. Madhavdas got offers for marriage from virgins, but he had made up his mind to marry only in case he could get a suitable widow from his caste. His re-marriage with Dhankore was arranged to come off on 2nd May 1871. All arrangements, including the Police, were made by Karsondas Mulji and Mr. K. N. Kabraji. Dhankore before marriage wrote to Madhavdas the following letter :

Philanthropist Madhavdas,

After having seen you, I have thought over the matter for full four days. I really hate those young widows of our caste who lead immoral lives; further, I am not bold enough to commit suicide and thereby incur a great sin. Again in my young age, so long as my mother is living, I do not feel any anxiety about my future. May God spare her for a hundred years; but God forbid, if she dies, what will be my state? Then there will not be any one to take care of me. I do not think it advisable that I should lead a servile life under my brother and his wife, that I should continue hearing taunts from them, and that I should for the sake of satisfying my bodily hunger, lead a life of a slave. Whatever little fortune I had, all my relatives have kept it with them. Whenever I ask them to return it to me, then I am regarded by them as their enemy. Therefore, the last remedy that I have decided to adopt, is the one suggested by you; I write this to say that I am willing to carry out the same. Now there is no hitch so far as I am concerned. In my dreams too, God has

inspired me to carry out the Divine plan. I therefore thank the Almighty and am ready and willing to respect this Divine inspiration. Goodbye for the present.

I am

a candidate for marriage with you and  
thereby one aspiring to be your obedient  
servant,

DHAN.

Madhavdas Raghunathdas wrote in reply the following letter to Dhankore:

Dear Dhankore, my future wife,

I have received your note in your beautiful handwriting. Now I am busy making all preparations. God has inspired you with a very wise solution; therefore do certainly believe that in this work we have Divine help. Don't have any doubts about this. Henceforward, we shall have to encounter opposition of several powerful people who are strong both in wealth and influence. We are before them just like little insects, but God will make us brave. He will give us strength enough to overcome all obstacles that may be put in our way by all these opponents; and He will in all ways do good to us. Therefore do not cherish any anxiety whatsoever in your mind. Now the day fixed to carry out our desired plan is 2nd May, 1871, Tuesday, Viasakh Sud 12th, 1927. On that day, in the afternoon, be prepared, and stand near the window of your house. After having made all arrangements, I shall send Madhavdas Khetsy, who will stand opposite the window of your house. Seeing him, you come down and follow him. After transacting all the necessary work, I and my friend Mr. Karsondas Mulji will be standing near the door of

Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji's bungalow, where there will be a carriage ready waiting for us. At that place you should come, following Madhavdas. One further suggestion I have to make is that when you come, do not bring with you any article worth a single pie besides the clothes on your person. Whatever may be your belongings, do keep all of them at your mother's place. Even if you bring any trifling thing with you, your mother and her relatives will accuse us of theft, with a view to harass us, and will put all of us in great difficulties. Therefore be very particular in this matter. I am not a man who is starving; and therefore understand that there is no necessity for bringing anything with you. I am not writing any more letter to you, and therefore take this letter of mine to be a final one.

I am yours,

a candidate for marriage with yourself,

MADHU BHULA.

Dhankore wrote a private letter to her mother as follows and put the same in her box :—

My dear mother, not being able any longer to endure the cruel pangs of widowhood, I had thought of committing suicide; and I had therefore given up taking food and was only satisfying my hunger by daily taking curds worth only a pice. By leading this mode of life, I got the disease of lockjaw, but it did not bring about my death. Dear mother, I entertain no fear so long as you are alive, but after your death, I do not think I can ever live under the sway of my brother and his wife, and it is likely at that time that I may go astray. Instead of this, I have decided to take this best course. Dear mother, it is very difficult that we shall

ever meet again, therefore do think me to be dead and gone; and if I come to know from somebody that all of you are well, I shall feel very much pleased. I have decided to take this step not at the instigation of any body. I have taken this step out of my own sweet choice, and therefore do not blame any other person for this. I have not taken any article or a single pie from your house, therefore do take proper care of your things. Further, do give the idols that I was worshipping to some good man. Again I have given a gold necklace to my maternal uncle for sale. The money realized by the sale of that and my clothes which I have kept in your house, should be distributed between my brother's daughter and my sister's daughter. Now I bid you final farewell.

Your dear but unfortunate daughter,

DHANKORE.

As desired by Madhavdas, Dhankore, on 2nd May left her mother's house in the afternoon, telling her brother's wife that she was going on a visit to her relative's house. At this time, Dhankore's mother had gone to Fort and her brother too had been to the Share Bazar. Dhankore accompanied Madhavdas, Khetsey to Sheth Lakhmidas's bungalow at Malabar Hill. From this bungalow, Madhavdas, his daughter Gomti, Dhankore, Karsondas, Mathuradas and Police detectives left Malabar Hill for Chinchpoo gly, where Madhavdas Raghunathdas had hired a bungalow for his residence for a month. Invitations had been sent to people of different communities wherein, without mentioning any names, people were informed that at 6 p. m. a widow remarriage was to be celebrated. Karsondas and Mathuradas, having reached

Chinchpogly, asked Dhankore and Madhavdas to stay at the Bungalow, and left the place to offer personal invitations to different persons. In the evening, a large number of persons of all communities was present. Among these we find the following names:—

Rao Bhadur Nana Moroji, Rao Bahadur Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Messrs. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, Bhaishunker Nanabhai, Jefferson, Nanabhai Rustumji Ranina, Jehangir Behramji Marzban, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, Mr. Bal Mangesh Vagle, Mr. Narayan Mahadeo Parmananad, Dr. Dhirajram Dalpatram, Rao Sahab Janardan Sakharam Gadgil and others. Before the marriage ceremony commenced, an agreement was prepared whereby Madhavdas agreed to give a present of Rs. 8,000 to Dhankore. This agreement contained also other necessary clauses. It was signed by Dhankore and Madhavdas in the presence of two magistrates. The religious ceremonies were performed by the well-known reformer, Shastri Vishnu Parashuram. Karsondas acted the part of Dhankore's God-father, and in this capacity he performed 'Kanyadan' of Dhankore to Madhavdas. The ceremony took place at 6 p. m. Karsondas gave four gold bangles worth Rs. 200 as a marriage present to Dhankore. Karsondas stayed with Dhankore and Madhavdas for the night and throughout the next day. All this time, at the Chinchpogly bungalow, Pathans and Police had kept proper watch. On the day when the marriage took place, Dhankore's mother, when she returned from Fort, finding Dhankore not at home, made enquiries at all places; at night, Dhankore's brother, Lakshmidas, when he was making enquiries at Malbar Hill met Madhavdas Khetsy on the road, and came to know through him

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that Dhankore had re-married. Before this information was conveyed, the whole family was weeping piteously for the absence of Dhankore, because all of them thought that Dhankore must have committed suicide; but when they came to know about the true state of affairs, their grief knew no bounds; they wept still more bitterly because in their eyes a widow marriage was worse than death. On the next day, all papers gave a graphic account of the marriage ceremony. This widow re-marriage, being the first of its kind among Baniyas, created a great sensation in the whole Baniya community. People said all sorts of things. Some said that 'Kali Yuga' was well established. Others mentioned that the earth was now sure to be destroyed and so on. On the next day evening, Karsondas left Chinchpogly to come to his place at Malbar Hill; but before he started, he had come to know that Dhankore's relatives had hired ruffians to assault him. Karsondas therefore was accompanied to his place by Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji and Sheth Sorabji Shapoorji Bengali. While they were going to Malabar Hill, they saw the ruffians returning from Malabar Hill. They had, waited for the whole day, but not knowing the actual time of Karsondas's return were disappointed and therefore were returning to their own homes. The ruffians on their part, not knowing Karsondas, could not do anything to the party. On the next day, Karsondas went to Chinchpogly to bid goodbye to the newly-wedded couple because he had to leave Bombay for Limree to join his service in time. The parting scene between them was a most touching one. All three shed tears. This proved to be the last parting scene between Karsondas and the wedded pair, because after two months Karsondas died at Limree. The orthodox people, on their part

remembered the fate of the Chief Judge of the Small Causes Court—Mr. Moroba Kanoba—of the Prabhu Caste. This gentleman had married a widow, and the couple was so much harassed that both the husband and wife had committed suicide, and their dead bodies were found in a well. They said that the fate of the newly-wedded Baniya couple also would be the same. Madhavdas had a cloth shop at Fort, and he was keeping at his firm deposits from several people. The depositors, when they came to know of Madhavdas's remarriage, and when they knew that he had married a widow of the very rich and influential family of Varjiwandas Madhavdas, were very much afraid that Madhavdas's business would come to grief; they, therefore, determined to take away their deposits from his shop. Madhavdas, on his part, knew full well what would happen. He was quite prepared for all emergencies. He had made arrangements for money, and when the depositors came to demand their money, each and all of them were paid; this made the depositors regain their confidence in Madhavdas. Karsondas at this time helped his friend Madhavdas by lending him Rs. 4,000. Karsondas had also arranged with Sheth Bengalee for further assistance so that Madhavdas might not come into trouble. The excitement among the people was very great. For nearly a month crowds of people gathered at Madhavdas's place to see what kind of creatures were the married couple. The Press was full of articles relating to this new event. Poets wrote poems celebrating the great event in the reform world; and people were reciting the same in the streets and in their houses. Sheth Bengalee, being the mutual friend of Madhavdas and Sheth Varjiwandas Madhavdas, informed Sheth Varjiwandas about this happy event; whereupon

Varjiwandas lost his temper and asked Mr. Bengali not to mention about this incident to him again. Mr. Bengali informed Varjiwandas because the latter had several times talked with Bengali about his reformed views. Mr. Varjiwandas was not a true reformer, and this appears further from the fact that for nearly a week he did not exchange a word with Mr. Bengali. On 16th May, 1871, a meeting of the Kapole Baniya Community was held at the house of the Mahajan Sheth Gopaldas Madhavdas to consider what steps should be taken against the newly remarried Kapole couple. At this meeting, in fairness to Madhavdas, the caste people ought to have called Madhavdas to give his explanation before passing sentence against him; but the ways of the caste were autocratic. In the absence of Madhavdas, the caste excommunicated Madhavdas and Dhankore and also passed resolutions that any persons of the caste who may have helped in bringing about this widow re-marriage should also be excommunicated, and further, that persons keeping any kind of social intercourse with these should also be excommunicated. This whole caste arrangement was kept secret. The caste Sheths did not remain satisfied with this. The rich Shethias of the caste made secret arrangements to harass the married couple in all possible ways. They arranged that the Kandolia priests of the Kapole caste should not perform any religious ceremonies at Madhavdas's house; further, arrangements were made with the Thakurdwari Brahmins that none of them should serve as cooks at Madhavdas's place. Both Seth Varjiwandas and his eldest son Sheth Tribhowandas did not leave any stone unturned to persecute Madhavdas Rughnathdas. These Sheths had gone to the utmost length of inducing Madhavdas's relatives to perform a religious ceremony

known as "Ghatasphot" by which the relatives had to burn the effigies of Madhavdas and Dhankore prepared from "Adad" grain, to observe ten days' quarantine and to perform several minor ceremonies as if both Madhavdas and Dhankore were really dead. When Madhavdas came to know about this, he sent a lawyer's notice to Sheth Varjiwandas Madhavdas, Sheth Gopaldas Madhavdas (the Mahajan Sheth) and to Goswami Jivanji Maharaj. This ceremony was intended to humiliate the re-married couple; but after the notice, the idea of performing the same was abandoned. For full twenty years continuously, in innumerable ways, Madhavdas and Dhankore were harassed but they both remained firm. After her remarriage, Dhankore never got an opportunity for seeing her mother for full twenty years; and Dhankore's mother never saw Dhankore throughout this long period. When Dhankore's sister was on her death-bed, Dhankore's request to allow her to see her sister's face before her death, was not granted. The ingenuous ways of persecution adopted by the Kapole Sethias and graphically recorded in the most interesting book "Story of a Widow Re-Marriage" written by Madhavadas Raghunathdas in 1891, showed that long after Karsondas's death, the question of widow re-marriage was not made more easy. Madhavdas wrote his Story with a view to show how the scorpion of caste restriction was poisoning the Hindu Society, to show that the fate of a person who married a widow in the Hindu Society was full of thorns and to illustrate the fact that if an old, wicked custom was adopted, then it necessarily forced people to have recourse to several sinful acts. Madhavdas admitted that after the passing of the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, the Widow Remarriage Movement had not made any progress

although 35 years had elapsed. Till 1891, 50 or 60 widow re-marriages took place in the Hindu community, and of these nearly 20 were brought about by the efforts of Madhavdas and by his monetary help. Among these twenty, there was not a single educated person to practise this necessary reform. Madhavdas advised his educated brethren to follow in the footsteps of their uneducated brethren, who really showed more spirit of social reform than themselves. Some years after, Madhavdas's daughter was married to a Kapole Baniya graduate, but not a single other Kapole dared to attend the marriage ceremony, because the caste-people were very much afraid of being excommunicated. I have mentioned the history of the first Baniya widow re-marriage in details and also stated the trend of events after Karsondas's death, with the deliberate purpose of showing that Karsondas's bold action in bringing about this first Baniya re-marriage was an event of great importance in several respects. In the first place, it was an ideal re-marriage because both the parties to the marriage were members of the same caste, both belonged to respectable families, both fully understood the significance of what they were doing, and both had anticipated the sufferings they would be obliged to undergo in the future. The times during which this re-marriage took place reflect the greatest credit on Karsondas. This action of his was the last, but none the less, most important social reform brought about by his strenuous personal efforts. In the year 1860, the well-known philanthropist, Sheth Jagannath Shankersett, had written a letter to the Managing Committee of the 'Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha' in which he had pointed out the evil results in the Gujarati community arising

for want of reform permitting young widows to re-marry. The Sabha of which Karsondas was a prominent member had arranged several lectures on the subject of Widow Remarriage, but at the time of the first Baniya re-marriage, the Sabha did not discharge its duty. This fact showed that even among the reformers of that time, Karsondas was a reformer of very great worth. After the remarriage of Madhavdas, Karsondas went to Limree. From that place he wrote two letters, one to Madhavdas, and the other to Dhankore. In Madhavdas's letter, among other things he wrote as follows:—

"Just as you have done a brave deed, please to continue to show such bravery till the last. Look after the welfare of Dhankorebai and see that you cherish love and affection towards her. Kindly see that she is not displeased in any way. She has displayed wisdom and bravery and whatever you do in return for it will not be enough."

To Bai Dhankore he wrote the following letter:—

"From my letter to Madhavdas Raghunathdas you must have come to know that we have reached Limree safely. Live bravely. Have patience. Do not be afraid of anything. While parting from you, I saw you sobbing and that made me shed tears. There was no other help but to leave you with regret, as I had to attend to my duties in Limree; otherwise I would have gladly stayed with you for a month or so; but simply because I am not staying with you, do not feel afraid. Madhavdas will not injure your feelings in any way; other friends will give you proper advice and enable you to be patient. I sincerely like you for your intelligence and courage. Henceforward remain assured.

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that in your and your husband's happiness and misery I shall be your sharer. God willing, the new tie that has bound us together will never be rent asunder, and I hope to see a day when we ought to live together and pass our whole lives in united family. Do write letters to me after taking permission from your husband; your letter will give me satisfaction. I am not able to write you more. I remember Gomi; do give her my love and affection."

### A BIG SHETHIA'S MEAN TRICK.

In connection with the caste resolutions passed against Madhavdas Raghunathdas, Sheth Mangaldas Nathoobhai played a mean trick. He had not signed the caste resolutions. He wanted to pass off, in the society of prominent members of the different communities, as a social reformer. It was Sheth Mangaldas who had promised to help Madhavdas, if he took legal steps against his caste people. Madhavdas did as advised; but when the Police Court case came up for hearing, Sheth Mangaldas proved untrue to his word, with the result that Madhavdas had to withdraw the case. In connection with this matter, Karsondas on 3rd July, 1871, wrote a letter to Sheth Bengali where we find the following statement:—"I am indeed glad to notice the settlement of the case. It is quite clear that Madhavdas was misled and the party who was at the bottom of it has played falsely to serve his own purpose. I have however advised Madhavdas to think no more either of the case or of the social sentence of excommunication. He should now devote himself to his business and study the comforts of his good wife." This showed that Karsondas was surrounded by many people who were not staunch reformers. They showed

spirit when it suited them. It was among reformers of this milk-and-water policy that Karsondas carried out his work of reformation. Karsondas highly praised Madhavdas and Dhankore for their "bold and noble step". It was Karsondas who proved a true friend to them. But for him it was extremely doubtful whether Madhavdas and Dhankore would have ever married. Karsondas commenced his public career at the age of twenty-one by attempting to write a paper on Widow-Remarriage; but that attempt proved futile. This did not mean that he was not cherishing in his heart the idea of befriending poor Hindu widows. I do not know whether Karsondas ever openly carried out propaganda in favour of this reform. I do not know whether in the 'Satya Prakash' or the 'Rast Gofar', or whether he ever wrote an article praising this kind of reform. It is likely that as the 'Buddhivardhak Sabha' had got several lectures delivered on the subject and Karsondas being an active member of that body, he may have taken part in discussions on that subject; but this is clear that he always cherished desire to befriend young Hindu widows. The great care with which Karsondas carried out the re-marriage of Dhankore showed that Karsondas was not to be blamed for the re-marriage of Bai Diwali which had proved ultimately to be a farce. Karsondas's first and last act was for the emancipation of his country-women and this showed how much the good of the women of his community was at his heart. On 19th August 1871, he wrote a letter to his good friend Sheth Shapurji Bengali in which he wrote:—

"I have every hope of recovery from illness, and you need not feel anxious about it. But should it please God to call me in His Presence I have no

doubt that you will take care of my family. The solution of their social difficulty I leave in your hands, and God will help you in it. You will consider me very weak in mind for thus addressing you, but you will make every allowance for these childlike but natural feelings."

This statement written ten days before his death by Karsondas is likely to be construed against him to show that Karsondas was repenting of his conduct and that therefore he desired to be re-admitted in his caste. In the Biographical Sketch of Mr. B. M. Malabari written by Mr. Dayaram Gidumal, LL. B. and C. S., the writer quotes from the "Indian Spectator" of 1883 in which occurs the following passage:—

"The only remedy is to dispossess caste of its power of excommunicating the widow who marries again. Government sanctions re-marriage, and caste opposes it. What a position for the Government of an Empire? It is all very well for English officials to say that the widow and her friends ought to defy caste. They do not know the terrible effect of the Mahajan's curse. The widow and her husband, and very often her and his families, are shunned like poison. Thus some forty people may suffer for the courage of two. They suffer in life and in death. No casteman joins them in domestic ceremony; none of them can take part in the social affairs of any casteman. So cruelly rigid is the discipline that it drew tears of anguish from that most patient Hindu martyr, Karsondas Mulji. He used to cry helplessly when his wife wanted to know when her family was to be re-admitted into the caste. Englishmen can have no idea of the bitterness of this social seclusion; it is worse than the bitterness of death."

This passage is likely to be misconstrued as showing that Karsondas was repentant of his conduct. Nothing of the kind. Even Mr. F. S. P. Lely mentions: "Worn out, no doubt, by trial and trouble, he passed away at the early age of 36." This too lends colour to the theory that Karsondas was sorry for his conduct. Sir Bartle Frere, the late Governor of Bombay, thought that the persecution of his caste hastened his death. Rao Saheb Mahipatram says: "In this opinion I do not concur with him. I never found him dejected and repining for being out of caste." "Personally Karsondas was not a man to run away from caste persecution by being tired." "Karsondas believed that it was an honour to remain excommunicated from the caste on account of his travels to England, and considered the troubles and insults resulting therefrom to be real happiness." The facts are that Karsondas's disposition was very mild; he had great respect for women; he eagerly longed and sincerely worked to improve their status and felt much for the habitual dissatisfaction that he noticed in his wife. If Karsondas was repentant of his past actions, I do not think he would have concealed the fact. When Madhavdas Raghunathdas and his wife Dhankore heard about Karsondas's death, both of them expressed their intense grief. Madhavdas expressed his admiration of his friend as follows: "There must be very few men of the type of Karsondas. He was of the stuff of those who do what they say. He was my true and intimate friend. In the matter of my re-marriage I had the good fortune of his help and courage. His advice and companionship both were very valuable to me."

The re-marriage of Dhankore was the last act of Karsondas as a great reformer. A man repenting of his

conduct, wishing to be re-admitted simply because he was tired of the agony and trouble entailed on him by his being excommunicated, would be the last person to bring about this very unpopular reform in the teeth of the most virulent opposition.

Dr. Pandurang Gopal, in his letter, dated 7th May 1877, to Rao Saheb Mahipatram, mentioned as follows among other matters :

“When I reached, I found Mr. Karsondas in the last pangs of exhaustion, but with all that, it surprised me to observe his placid and hopeful countenance. Towards the evening of the same day, he found himself growing worse and thereupon called me to listen to certain directions he was about to give. He said he had prepared a will and duly assigned his property, the only earthly wish he had, therefore, was that I should convey his last respects to his friends. He believed he had done his duty towards his less enlightened fellowmen, and if he had made any enemies, he had perhaps unconsciously done so in a good and beneficent cause, for which he prayed for God’s light and mercy. He desired for His grace on his friends and foes alike.”

This shows that Karsondas was a reformer of a noble type, one who had no personal animosity against anyone.

After Karsondas’s death on 28th August, 1871, an influential Committee was appointed, and they appealed to the general public by mentioning as follows: “Recognition of his disinterested and persevering services in the cause of moral and social reform among the Native Community of Western India and the remembrance of the sufferings which he endured in the prosecution of

his great purpose, present an undoubted claim to the support of the enlightened portion of the community—a claim which, it is thought, will be cheerfully responded to."

Out of the sum collected, Rs. 3,000 were presented to the Bombay University for the purpose of founding in his name an annual prize of Rs. 100 to be awarded to the writer of the best essay in English on any moral or social subject. The letter dated 11th November 1873 addressed to James Taylor, Esq., Registrar of the University of Bombay, contained the following:

"But his name as a practical social reformer and the author of numerous Gujerati works, and his labours and sufferings in the promotion of the good of his countrymen which he had greatly at heart, will, it is hoped, be considered sufficient to justify his friends and admirers in desiring to perpetuate his memory in the manner now solicited." This letter was signed by S. Shapurji in his capacity of the Hon. Secretary, Karsondas Mulji Memorial Fund.

Before mentioning Karsonda's views on the necessary reforms to be introduced in Indian society, it is necessary to know what were his views regarding the general defects of Indians. I have mentioned the defects of Indians as pointed out by Karsondas while treating about his views on different subjects. I give below his views on miscellaneous matters:—

Indians are very deficient in point of industry, unlike English people. They must learn to do things by putting their whole heart and soul in any work they undertake.

They must have healthy rivalry whereby they might have improved methods of doing different works.

They must introduce the healthy spirit of emulation.

They must have division of labour introduced in their work, so that people who are qualified for one particular work may not have to do work of a kind wherein their high skill is not necessary.

Indians should have the spirit of adventure, which is absolutely wanting in them at present, and this like English people, many of whom have this spirit not only for the benefit of their own country but for that of humanity. Such people should rise in numbers in our country.

Indians have not got the spirit of independence. They must speak out their mind irrespective of the fact whether it will displease some one or not. This is specially useful where the interests of our country are concerned. In this matter, English people's good trait requires to be imitated.

Indians of all ranks and classes ought to cultivate the spirit of free action.

The superstitious and credulous Indians should give up consulting astrologers. Elderly Indians consider it not befitting to join in physical exercises. Our thoughts wherein we should observe a sense of shame are mistaken. Indians have become effeminate by not taking bodily exercises.

Indians have the habit of following their ancestral profession. This should be given up.

Indians have very little knowledge of how to preserve their self-respect. They do not mind, for selfish reasons, to do mean work and to compromise their honour. Our country has suffered immensely and will suffer still more. We must give up false prestige and obstinacy and preserve our self-respect. The life of the man who has lost his self-respect, is spent uselessly.

If there were any spirit of patriotism or any respect for our race among Indians, they would not be so indifferent as they are to be found at present.

Our artisans must try to excel each other as they do in England.

Indians must start many Indian firms in England and do work of trade through them.

Indian houses should have chimneys in their kitchens.

Indians should have as much disgust as English people against immorality.

Indian salesmen and pedlars should learn the art of politeness.

It is not necessary to discard all kinds of Indian clothes and to put on clothes of English fashion. Indians should not give up putting on turbans; they should not put on caps. They should make some changes. By putting on 'dhotars' several parts of the bodies remain naked and sometimes decency is not preserved. In streets 'dhotars' fly about exposing the nakedness of the body.

We should not imitate all methods of dining like Europeans. The Hindu method of sitting on ground for dining is to be deprecated. Eating with hands and fingers is not befitting civilised times. Dining with spoons and forks is good.

Indians must show courage at the right moment. Real courage is only that which enables us to come out boldly in the field without being at all afraid of the consequences ensuing from the same.

In India we require friends who will ever give up their lives for the sake of friendship. Alas! how is it possible for friends who remain aloof for fear of being excommunicated from their caste, to give up their lives for the sake of friendship.

I give below Karsondas's views on Reforms and while doing so, will, wherever necessary, use his own words.



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## A. KARSONDAS'S VIEWS ON SOCIAL REFORMS.

### (a) ON CASTE AND CASTE DISTINCTIONS.

“There is no uniform rule for one town or village or one caste for the observance of caste-distinctions. It differs in different places and at different times. Even in the same place and for the same caste, people observe caste-distinctions in different ways.”

“People cherish false notions about caste distinctions. It would be a different thing if they prided themselves on the right notions of the same. People at present outwardly make a show and talk loud, but do not observe in practice caste distinctions. In the following instances caste distinctions are not observed: At Juggannathji, Hindus of all castes dine together; but if they do so elsewhere it is recognised as breach of caste discipline. In Bombay Meishris, Hindus of all castes dine together; but in Gujerat, the former do not take even water from the latter, and if they do, they are said to have broken caste rules. In Bombay, Baniyas and Brahmins are allowed to drink water from leather bags; in Aden, such water brought by Mahomedans is used; but this is not allowed in Bombay. In Forbunder and Mangrol, one can take drinks on ‘gadis’ once used by Mahomedans; but it is not allowed elsewhere. The following differences in one and the same caste are observed:—

Some bathe every time they dine; some eat sweet-meats bought from bazar; some take medicines given by Christians in which water touched by them is used; some give wine to Europeans in their own homes; some take lemonade or soda water from Treachers and Rogers; some

eat things prepared in their homes in railways and do not mind if they are touched by Mahomedans; some while going to Zanzibar, prepare their food and eat it in a vessel of Mahomedans. In the following cases where people ought to be outcasted, they are not socially punished :

Some get polluted at prostitutes' houses; some by taking ' bhang ' and ' chandul ' at Mahomedan shops; some by taking wine unnoticed by others; some by having social intercourse with low caste rich people at their places; some by coming from the Andamans, where they have partaken of food at the hands of Mahomedans and Malays."

"What better epithet than slavery could be applied than to the state of a people who, being afraid of breaking caste-rules could not come out of the corners of their homes and travel to foreign civilized countries ?"

"Alas ! how little love there is among our Indians for travel. I have already written that so long as our countrymen will not travel to foreign countries, their country will never rise. Oh ! When such a love of travel will arise in their hearts and specially how long will Hindu rich men, being afraid of their caste, spend their time in the corners of their houses ? It behoves them to seriously consider this matter."

"To have such spirit of free action among Indians is difficult. We have suffered so long under the tyrannical Mahomedan rule that our organ of independence is in a comatose condition or is atrophied. Under the British Government and coming in contact with English people, if we do not strive to get independence, it will appear that we are not fit to get it. It is not the quality of a free man to remain slavishly obedient to separate and small castes

and to be obstructed in the carrying out of reforms and to be afraid of going to foreign countries. If English people surmise from this that our people are not fit to attain independence, how can you falsify their inference?"

"In England distinctions are observed between men of different professions but there are no caste distinctions. They do not consider themselves polluted in eating and drinking from each other's hands. They consider the whole world to be their caste and therefore they are neither obliged to suffer the oppression of a handful of men of their caste nor to pass their time in slavery. Our people will never be independent so long as they do not give up caste distinctions. Oh! when shall we begin to think that the man who has lost his independence has wasted his life. In our country, great works of reform have not been undertaken on account of the observance of caste customs. When these will receive a death-blow all doors of reform will be opened. When we enquire minutely it appears to us that the original foundation of caste-distinctions has commenced to give way and the opening of railways has further carried out its work of destruction. So far this is good; but now it befits us to uproot the delapidated foundation."

"We do not achieve immediate success in matters of reforms. Any amount of trouble taken or any amount of money spent for the same, even if we do not get immediate results therefrom, it is our duty not to give them up in a spirit of despair. Such works do not fructify at once. From the mere fact that such do not yield results at once we should not infer that the time has not come to begin them. How can we expect to reap without sowing seeds? If we sow the seeds of different reforms now and even if we do not taste the fruits of our labours, still our sons

will surely get benefit therefrom. Therefore in matters of reform, it is neither prudent to retreat or to stop progressing by suffering disappointment."

"If such and such a gentleman comes then I will carry out reform or if such and such a gentleman becomes ready I will travel to England". Talking in this way, will never raise the status of this country. Every man must firmly think in his own mind that he must do a particular work and if any body prevents him from doing it, it is better to die than to remain a slave under his rule. Alas! Why should we be afraid of doing a work when it has appeared good and necessary to our mind? If we have to be afraid we should only be afraid of God. Of what use is a life, when being afraid of our brethren, we do not travel abroad and do not do any important work but pass our life in the corner of our house."

"My thoughts will displease such and such a man and therefore I should keep quiet"—such thoughts are not cherished by Englishmen; they express their opinion on all matters with independence and in doing so are not afraid of elder brother or any man of higher position."

"We do not see among Englishmen living in civilised England, several of our bad customs; hence it at once becomes evident that their social state is superior to ours. Once we have breathed the atmosphere of freedom of that free land, we naturally get inspired to be free from the shackles of superstitious customs."

"At present our pride of caste consists in maintaining caste distinctions. This should be shifted therefrom and diverted in doing good to our caste-brethren."

"Fear of caste is tyrant king. If you boldly come out by discarding that fear that tyrant king will obey you."

## (b) ON FOREIGN TRAVEL.

"When there were frequent invasions of our country by Mahomedans then all Indians were engaged in defending their hearths and homes, and hence were necessarily prevented from travelling abroad. Further as Mahomedans had attempted to convert many persons to their faith by force, it terrified people and made them think that in foreign countries they surely will not desist from acting similarly. This, perhaps, accounts for our ancestors having framed a rule not to cross the river Indus. The custom of that time may have served its purpose of a shield for the protection of our religion, but during the present period it has proved to be a regular fetter."

"Our travel to civilized countries enables us to acquaint ourselves with the good qualities of their inhabitants, their customs, their ability in the pursuits of different arts, their statesmanship. This knowledge enables us to compare these with those of our country. When our countrymen will open the way for foreign travel and increase their contact with foreign countries by frequent visits, then and then only our country will recover its soul, will experience a true awakening, and our different senses will regain their lost powers, we will be ashamed to wear any longer on our persons chains of superstition and it will further enable us to find out as to how far our country has lagged behind in the onward march of progress."

"Every man born on this earth, not having seen a country like England, must be considered as not having seen anything. Our countrymen, so long as they, like tortoises in a well, considering their own country as their

whole world, sit at home, so long they will not come to know how far their own country has lagged behind in points of learning, arts and industry. It behoves those who are favoured by fortune that, once in their life-time they should acquire knowledge and contentment by visiting this civilized country."

"How long would you like to be fettered in the matter of foreign travel? Are you not ashamed to move about among intelligent and civilized people? After your enlightenment, how do you like to wear fetters, under this government and in this reformed age? Is it not the duty of every educated and intelligent Indian to break these tightly-gripping fetters with knowledge? How long shall we tolerate this slavery? The tide of Reform is at its zenith and the wind of independence is gaily blowing. Arise and launch your vessel. Sailors reach the port safely who sail with the current; others who do not do so have to meet with tempests. Lift up the long-lying anchor and bravely launch your vessel while there is time, and I assure you victory will be yours. The work is of such a nature that if it is allowed to be delayed, it would be detrimental to our interests."

"By travelling to a civilized country and by coming in contact with its inhabitants, we shall be able to reform more easily our social state than by any other means. It is difficult to bring about a transformation in the customs of the people by merely preaching to them. The reforms that are effected by personally coming in contact are not brought about in any other way. The proverb "A man is like the company he keeps" is not wrong. Nobody can deny that by being in the company of the righteous we shall be righteous, and by being in the company of the vicious we shall be vicious too."



“Let people say what they like about my travels. I have done what appeared to me to be good and proper. I am patiently bearing all troubles for this; but the greatest satisfaction to me is this that I have performed a great and good pilgrimage. By remembering this pilgrimage I derive in my troublous times, a pleasure which makes me highly gratified. I think that just as in a great war undertaken for the defence of a country, the soldiers in the front row must get killed or wounded, however big the army may be, similarly in every important undertaking of reforms, the pioneers must suffer. So long as the friends and companions of reformers by being courageous will not share the troubles of their friends, the whole race or caste of itself will never join in any great work of reform. No great piece of reform has ever been achieved with the unanimous voice of a whole race or caste and I think it improbable that it ever will be so achieved. Progress in reforms will not stop by oppressing the pioneer reformers. Do not entertain the belief that the way to foreign travel will be stopped by the fact of the sufferings of the pioneer gentlemen who visited England. Just as I did not stop by observing for myself the troubles experienced by Bhai Mahipatram, similarly I believe others will not stop by observing my condition. When our countrymen, by means of English education, will come to entertain correct notions of English freedom, then and then only every gentleman will think in his mind as follows: ‘I have neither sold my liberty to my caste nor have I become its slave. It is better to die than to be prevented or fettered in our hands and feet, by doing those actions which appear to be good and necessary. When our countrymen will learn to cherish within themselves

such spirit of freedom then the tyranny and fetters of caste will be destroyed and the doors of reform will be opened. For the last time, I repeat that let people speak what they like about my travels; I have hopes that good alone will result from it. Oh God! make me realize soon this my hope and release soon my countrymen from the bondage of caste. Amen!"

"We are at present living in a civilized age and under a civilized Government."

"The waves of the sea of social reform are in tide; the wind of freedom is blowing... Raise the anchor and launch your ship on its voyage and I am sure of your final success."

#### (c) ON WOMEN.

"The measure of the social state of a country is taken from the status of the women of that country. The social condition of that country is bad in which the position of women is low. The fundamental prop of our social state is the position we assign to our women. We are saying that if a man's wife turns out to be bad, his social life is spoiled. Just so is the state with a country. Just as a well-mannered, kind and cultured lady is an ornament of a house, so are well-mannered, kind and cultured women, ornaments of a country."

"Just as we wrongly feel ashamed to move about with our women-folk in visiting places of interest with them, in freely conversing with them openly, the English do not. By giving up such false notions, their males and females derive mutual advantages. Women get advantage of seeing all good things, hearing all good things, attending good functions and participating in the pleasures of a good company. Husbands and wives

moving together at all times and at every place, their love and affection towards each other increase."

"Men derive a kind of pleasure in the company of women. Their minds get joy and become cheerful by their sweet talk; they forget for the time being worldly anxieties, and their minds, being thus refreshed, they join their work with new and fresh vigour. Women too derive great benefits. They are kept informed of all new talk and new things. Society too gets benefits. In a mixed society, men are obliged to talk decently and with propriety and they do not get any opportunity of joking lightly or cracking indecent jokes. Indians, in this matter, cherish false shame."

"English people give great honour to their women. Women are weak, their bodies and minds are delicate. English people take proper care that these are not injured in any way. As far as possible, they carry out their women's wishes.....In short, in all ways and at all times they care to respect them as much as they can. In our country, women are not honoured. Some Indians consider women's status to be that of a shoe. When an Indian loses his wife, considering her to be a shoe, he marries another woman at once. Indians are heard now and then speaking in the following vein :

Women are born to do menial work without remuneration; women ought to be controlled; those who have committed many sins have girls born to them, etc., etc. Compare the picture of English women with this picture and mark the great difference."

"In the scales of civilisation, that country cannot be weighed where women are not honoured, that country will never achieve greatness in the world. If English

people came to know that you thus dishonour your women with whom you have contracted a tie of love for life by marriage and you dishonour your infant girls who have taken birth from your bodies, they will be extremely surprised. If you do not respect your own home, then how is it possible for you to increase your honour in the world? Woman constitutes your home and therefore, you ought to treat her with respect. Without such honour, our country's status will never be high."

"I admit that we cannot give as much honour or of that kind as English people give till our women remain in the unfortunate condition of being denuded of the ornaments of education. Just as an uncouth and foolish man gets puffed up with honour, and abuses it, such will be the case with women. Keep the reins of this in your hands and preserve the honour of your wife-your own home."

"It is necessary that women should decorate themselves but the decoration should not be of a nature either to harm their bodies or to deceive people. It is good that Indian ladies, instead of spending money for costly clothes spend it for ornaments. It is not proper that in England, ladies of rich and middle class families should spend large sums of money on dress, simply for the sake of fashion."

"In India women of gentlemen's families consider it becoming to decorate their bodies with many ornaments; but they must know that to put on a few ornaments of tasteful workmanship is less burdensome and enhances their beauty. If a woman wants to show off her riches, she can put on ornaments of the above kind, worth a lac of Rupees."

"I like the custom of our women putting on silk sarees. One necessary reform they should effect is this: that instead of walking barefooted, they should put on slippers or shoes and stockings. Our ladies must not put on heavy ornaments both on their legs and their wrists."

"The country where women are not honoured could not be considered as civilised. Such a country can never attain a position of greatness in the world."

"Sir Bartle Frere had said in one of his speeches as follows:—

"All who have aspirations for a high political future for this country should know that those great changes which they look for cannot be achieved without raising the social position of the women of this country generally".

This Governor has obtained great experience of our country. There is a great and deep meaning in this sentiment and it behoves Indians to understand the same".

"Ladies of good position chat and laugh with their servants and clerks, but consider it undignified to talk with their own husbands or husbands' friends. They keep their faces quite open when they walk in the streets; but no sooner their husbands or husbands' friends pass by them in the streets, then the ladies practically cover up their faces with their clothes. I do not understand what kind of modesty is this. My countrymen and countrywomen should know that immodesty consists in speaking rudely and in behaving viciously. Oh! how thin clothes several of our countrywomen wear and with what bad grace they walk in the streets. They speak loudly in houses. For this they are not ashamed. Why therefore should they consider it wrong if they go out with their husbands?"

"Indian women of high class and rich ones should imitate the noble work of their English sisters who do day service of poor patients, who care for their fellow-beings in a way so as to avoid them sufferings of hunger, and of experiences of unhappiness. Service of this kind should be taken up by Indian women."

"Our women should take upon themselves the whole burden of housekeeping. They should not wear very tight bodices and use artificial hair. Women should show only the natural beauty they possess. It is a bad custom of English women to constrict their waists to the injury of their health and show off their beauty artificially by applying powder to their faces. Doing so is not a mark of civilised society."

"The custom among Indian males of asking their women and girls to dine afterwards and separately is not good."

#### (d) CHARITY REFORMS.

"Indians are very ignorant as to the nature of real philanthropy. Orthodox Indians wrongly believe that they are doing charity when they spend large sums in building temples, and in performing pilgrimages to distant lands. They also commit a mistake in feeding Sadhus, in giving indiscriminately money gifts to all kinds of beggars, and in giving alms to Brahmins ignorant of any knowledge of Shastras. These Brahmins, with the help of these alms, fatten themselves by eating rich food and do not take any troubles in doing any useful work. Some Indians mistakenly believe that by acquiring wealth by fraudulent means and disposing of the same in building Pinjrapoles for animals and doing such work is philanthropy."

"I approve very cordially the arrangements for starting a company in Bombay for lending money at low interest to every aspirant willing to travel to foreign land for learning different pursuits, and say that this philanthropic work will, for ever, keep under a deep debt of obligation this country and its inhabitants."

"I desire starting of societies for supporting indigent widows; for supporting indigent children; for helping families suffering from misery; for preventing immorality among people; for improving the condition of labourers and ryots; for protecting lives in fire and other great calamities; for caring for sanitation among the people; pointing out the true moral and spiritual paths; for preventing infanticides; for affording encouragement and assistance to the reformers of the country."

#### (e) PURITY REFORMS.

Karsondas was dead against immorality because he himself lived a thoroughly righteous life. He had greatest hatred for this kind of vice. It was because of this hatred, that after coming to know from personal knowledge and from hearsay, that the Maharajas of the sect of Vallabhacharya were practising immoral deeds that he gave up going to temples and to visit the Maharajas. It was for this, that he waged a right royal battle against the conduct of the Maharajas, although he himself was born and bred in that sect. He thought that men committing adultery should be classed as having broken religion and not those who had faith in their religion but who merely did not carry out all formal religious practices. He disliked Indians doing honour to rich people who committed adultery with beautiful women and who boasted of these deeds before their friends. He

lamented that Indians, while committing immoral deeds, had no fear of public opinion. He knew several Hindu widows leading immoral lives and therefore thought it better that for young widows, desiring to re-marry, there should not be any coercion on the part of any of their relatives. All books written or published by Karsondas are moral and are of a kind as to be safely allowed to be read by young people. In his writings, he avoided florid love stories, immodest ideas and indecent expressions. He desired rich people fond of hearing good music to call professional musicians, but did not like the idea of their calling lady musicians who were prostitutes. While he was making preparations to go to England he had arranged for a Brahmin cook for a yearly salary of Rs. 500; but when he came to know that the cook with whom he had arranged was a man of loose character he cancelled the agreement with him and arranged with another cook on a higher salary of Rs. 800 per year. In London, while walking in public streets, he used to run so that he may not be harassed by immoral women. Contrasting the position of licentious men and women in England he saw that there was nothing of that kind in India. He entirely disliked the system of English dances that he witnessed when he was in England. He specially hated the two dances known as Quadrille and Waltz. He says: "Whatever may be the merits of these dances, they are the foundations and beginning of immorality. When bodies of men and women touch one another, it is difficult to prevent lascivious and immoral thoughts arising in their minds. He disliked ignorant, illiterate and superstitious Vaishnav ladies, having immoral relations with Maharajas under the mistaken belief that doing so was a highly meritorious religious deed. He intensely hated



the "Ras Mandalis" or amorous love meetings of Vaishnava men and women and Maharajas. He disliked the very existence among the Vaishnavas of a separate class of devotees of Maharajas named 'Vartaks' who were professional pimps to their spiritual heads. He abhorred Vaishnava ladies singing indecent songs in Maharajas' temples as well as when the Maharajas visited their houses. He did not like Hindu ladies singing indecent songs at the sacred marriage festivals and that too in the presence of their male relatives and of outsiders. He hated intensely the prevalent custom among the Vaishnava ladies devoting their lives in leading immoral lives and sacrificing their daughters also in leading that same nefarious practice. He abhorred Vaishnava ladies sacrificing the chastity of their daughters under the delusion that it would cure their relatives of their diseases. He impressed upon his countrywomen wherein true modesty consisted. He told them that modesty consisted in acting virtuously and not in concealing faces in the presence of males. He wished Hindu ladies not to wear thin clothes so as to encourage immoral thoughts in the minds of those who looked at them. He found fault with his Baniya caste brethren who neglected to outcaste their caste brethren who got themselves polluted at prostitutes' houses. He felt disgusted at the indecent manner in which Hindus generally were misbehaving at the 'Holi' festival and specially the Maharajas' indecencies on this sacred festival.

## **B. KARSONDAS'S VIEWS ON EDUCATIONAL REFORMS.**

Indians should study politics, arts and crafts. There should be one language—Hindustanee—throughout India,

so that people living in different parts may come to know and love each other. For those who have not received English education, there should be besides one language, one script viz : Devnagri. Indian ryots should know both how to read and write. Indians should travel to foreign countries. A company should be started so that aspirants wishing to go to foreign lands for the purpose of learning different subjects may be enabled to get loans at a low rate of interest. Regarding the benefits of such travel Karsondas said:—"That knowledge which I did not get during four years' study in an English school and two and a half years at College, I have got by looking at the British Museum." Parents should not grudge to spend money like English people for their children's education. They should not remain contented by giving them only school education. This is not enough. Children should receive also college education. Rich people can afford to do so; but middle-class parents should practise great economy in incurring heavy but unnecessary marriage expenses and their savings should be utilized in giving to their children higher education. Rich persons' children should not remain ignorant. Like children of rich Englishmen, they should have higher education. Boarding schools should be established so that students by living there may learn to take care of themselves, pay proper attention to their studies, and remain free from parental indulgence. Women should also be educated. Indians should not remain contented by educating women to read and write only. Knowing this is not complete education, they should give them proper education. Women of the middle classes, when they remain illiterate, deprive the males of their families to devote their attention

to household work. If they are educated, then their husbands and other male members of their families will find more leisure to enlighten their minds. The neglect of women's education will to a great extent be remedied if Indians of high position make up their minds not to marry girls who have not received proper education.

### C. KARSONDAS'S VIEWS ON RELIGIOUS REFORMS.

"Our whole religion consists only in putting on outward religious marks, visiting of temples for worship, and boasting of observing caste distinctions outwardly for mere show. Such is the state of religion in our country."

"With us worship and prayer consist in going to temples running by shouting 'Je Je' and in looking at idols with folded hands."

"In our country, if a stone is lying about and if some applied 'kunkoo' or 'sindur' powder to it, all will offer worship to the same, considering it to be a God. In this wise, how many stone Gods have arisen in our country!"

"If you ask the Indians of high position to name their religious books and to tell you the contents thereof, they will very likely betray their total ignorance."

"At present, thoughtless people consider their religion to consist in observing caste distinctions outwardly. Those who speak lies often, those who swear, those who commit adultery, cheat their own brethren, ruin poor widows and suffer transportation for life for their criminal actions, they are not said to have broken their religion; but those who fail to observe outwardly caste distinctions or commit some mistake in their

observance of the same are said to have committed a great sin and are said to have broken their religion."

Karsondas was of opinion that so long as a man does not voluntarily abandon his religion, religion will not forsake him. He disliked people following old customs in the name of religion. In regard to religion and foreign travel he said: "Those who object to foreign travel in the name of religion, hardly understand wherein consists their religion." He hated the immoral practices of the spiritual guides of the Sect of Vallabhacharya. He wanted spiritual guides to be learned and able enough to preach good sermons on moral and religious duties of the people. They should know, as befits their high position, how to offer solemn prayers with concentration. He wanted Indians to know well their own religion, just as higher classes of people in England do, and to give up credulity. He wanted Indians not to support idle and able-bodied Brahmins who were innocent of any knowledge of Hindu Shastras and who had no ability whatsoever to preach correct views on morality. By acting in this manner, Karsondas was of opinion that Hindus do not get learned Brahmins to perform well, important religious ceremonies, and when they do get such occasionally, these people put on airs and insult their clients. He wanted that Hindus should gladly bestow alms on useful and industrious Brahmins who studied Hindu Shastras and who led moral lives and were able to preach morality. He thought it proper that Hindus should start a Society for the specific purpose of pointing out the right moral and spiritual paths to people. As regards Christian religion he said:—

"I do not believe that among all religions, the Christian religion is the only revealed religion, but I

believe firmly that the state of that religion is better than that of ours."

#### D. KARSONDAS'S VIEWS ON POLITICAL REFORMS.

Karsondas praised the British Government for the many advantages it had bestowed on Indians. He prayed for its prosperity. With regard to this Government he said as follows :

"Our country, after remaining for many years under the oppressive and disorderly reign of Mahomedan rulers has at last come under the mild and independent rule of the English people. Oppression, wars and insurrections have stopped. Looting by Bhils and Waghris has stopped; the awfully bad and greatly sinful practice of Sati is destroyed; learning and arts have been spreading; roads and bridges have been built; steam-boats and steam-engines have been working; industry and trade have increased; and everybody is glad and happy. All this is due to the kind British Government. May that Government ever prosper!"

Karsondas lamented the life of dependence led by Indians and said: "Alas! when will Indians realize the thought that the life of that person who has lost independence was lived in vain?" He lamented Englishmen's ignorance and indifference about Indians' grievances and wanted Indians to come in closer contact with them by travelling to the country of the rulers. In this connection he expressed his views as follows:—

"The reason why a large portion of the inhabitants of England are ignorant and indifferent about our country and countrymen is because we have not come in closer

touch with them. If a good and influential Englishman is convinced about the justness of our grievance he will not be indifferent towards it."

"Travel to England—a country which rules over us and by coming into closer contact with its inhabitants will greatly benefit us in political matters. Our contact with them will give them better insight into our requirements, will enable them to find out the different matters in which our people suffer injustice and the ways in which our rights are being taken away, and this consequently will enable them to pay due attention towards them."

Karsondas asked Indians not to judge Englishmen in England from the conduct of those living in India. He said in respect to this:—

"It will be our great mistake if we judge from Englishmen in India, the character of those in England. In India, missionaries and those respectable Englishmen who are of noble disposition alone love Indians and take pains for their welfare; but many of those, keeping in mind their own selfish interests, look at Indians with displeasure. In our country, the hot climate produces evil effect on their dispositions and make them hot-tempered."

## **E. KARSONDAS'S VIEWS ON MISCELLANEOUS REFORMS.**

### **(a) DUTIES OF RICH PEOPLE.**

Rich people should follow in the footsteps of English Lords who diligently spend their time in getting knowledge and information so that they can be of use to their country. In England, even middle class people spend

their time in study. They should study different sciences. They have ample leisure to do so. Further they should deeply study politics. Rich people who have not studied in this manner should be disqualified to serve on Legislative Councils. Wealthy people who are ignorant about politics should be considered simpletons and fools; it is only then that rich people, Thakores and Sardars will feel the necessity of studying politics. Many rich people give thousands and lacs of Rupees in charity and thereby earn name and fame. Karsondas says:

"I am of opinion that when in India, Indians cease to honour rich people who purchase honours, and when they honour those only who desire to earn fame by their study and industry, then and then only our country will take a favourable turn. Even if they are engaged in some professional pursuits, they should still continue studying politics, arts and sciences. Rich people should take up the pursuit of agriculture, a profession which in the estimation of Indians holds the highest position. In this profession, they should introduce new methods. Rich people should live righteously." Karsondas says:

"There are some people who consider it an act of great courage to amass wealth by deceit and cunning and to committ adultery with beautiful women and they boast of these exploits before their friends; there are some rich people who fearlessly and during open daylight wander among the houses of prostitutes; some rich people have become so by committing rogueries and by ruining widows. In spite of these deeds all respect them for their wealth, they feeling the glamour of their riches fail to see their evil deeds."

"Rich people should not content themselves, if their children know only how to read and write English, be-

cause language is not learning but only a means of acquiring learning. They, being in a position to spend money, should not send their children to charitable institutions to get instruction. Like English people, rich people when they give big dinners should not invite a large number of people, but should invite only their friends and acquaintances. Rich Indians should cultivate a taste and love for travel. Hindus should give up caste fear and boldly travel to foreign countries." Karsondas says:—

"It behoves those who are favoured by fortune to acquire knowledge by visiting this civilised country (England) once in their life time." Indian women belonging to high class and rich families should imitate the noble work of their English sisters who perform social service to poor patients and care for their fellow-beings in a way so that they may not be unhappy and may not have to suffer from hunger."

#### (b) VIEWS ON OTHER KINDS OF REFORMS.

"It is a truism to say that unless we suffer some what, our country will not be benefited. I offer my greatest gratitude to God that we are neither under a tyrannical government nor in times of Galileo. The sun of reform has arisen. Arise and awake, my countrymen! The long night of superstition and ignorance is gone and we have sufficiently taken long and deep sleep. Our atrophied hands and feet have again been gaining their lost power; the wind of independence is serenely blowing. Leave aside idleness and rise enthusiastically. Take time by the forelock; the rising sun of reform will not



tarry long for your sake. Therefore as advised by Narmad :

Cast out idleness from our body and  
   get up with enthusiasm,  
 Drive out fear by associating with  
   brave people.

If superstition comes in your way  
   do not mind it,

Bury thoughts of infamy in a  
   timid house.

At present, we are living in a civilised age and under a civilised government. The present time is suitable for reform and independence. In Europe and America, wars are waged for independence; people lose their lives for its sake. Those who do not care to be free are said to be those who are remaining in a slavish state. Who would like to remain in this state? Is it not time to free ourselves from fetters?"

"It is my conviction that although we have amassed great fortune owing to the prosperity in the cotton trade, although we talk loud on questions of reform, although we have several factories and companies in Bombay, we are every year falling backward and backward in point of progress."

Karsondas does not approve of the Derby race and the wagers entered into at that time.

"I do not think gambling must be carried on such a gigantic scale anywhere as it is carried on at the Derby. I thought that the encouragement given to it by the King and his minister was a sort of a stain on the fair name and fame of England."

"Who can call that couple a married couple where the husband and wife do not like each other's faces? It is better that parents should keep their children unmarried than that they should contract such marriages."

"Alas! Alas! the country whose sons' virility is lost in youth, how can that country be rich in virile sons? Alas! Alas! that country where children are married in young age and are burdened with heavy social duties, how can they study for a long period and undertake long foreign voyages?"

#### SOME CONTROVERSIAL POINTS.

At this stage it is necessary to clear some controversial points raised by some writers.

Mr. Navalram Lakshmiram wrote that he had heard from some people that at Rajkot, Karsondas had openly given out his views that he did not believe in the next world and that he did not believe in the existence of God. Karsondas's writings do show that he believed in the existence of the next world. It is not necessary for our purpose to discuss whether he believed in the next world or not. We should be concerned only with his doings in this world. It is useless for human beings to worry about another world and their chances there. It is their duty to make the most and the best possible use of the world in which they now dwell. This they can do in two ways, viz: by perfecting themselves, and helping others to perfect themselves. In other words, people can discharge their two-fold duties in this world by adopting Individualism and Socialism. These two are the hand-maids of Religion. The true spirit of religion should be to expect from every man according to his capacity, and extend help, in the

material, the intellectual, the moral and the spiritual realms, to every man according to his needs. We have to see whether Karsondas perfected himself or not, and further whether he rendered help in different spheres of life to his countrymen or not. If he has done that, it is immaterial whether he believed in the next world or not. The end of Karsondas's worship was to be at one with his ideals, and to reproduce the same as perfectly as possible within himself. Assuming for a moment that Karsondas did not believe in the existence of God, which is not a fact, was Karsondas's life not one which benefited immensely both his countrymen and countrywomen? Dr. James Martineau writes: "If I see a man living out of an inner spring of inflexible right; if his eye flashes with scorn at mean and impure things which are a jest to others; if high examples of honour and self-sacrifice bring the flush of sympathy upon his cheek; if in his sphere of rule he plainly obeys a trust, instead of enforcing an arbitrary will, and in his sphere of service does his work with the thought only that it be good; I shall not pry into his closet or ask about his creed, but own him at once as the godly man." Any person, who cursorily looks at the career of Karsondas will at once say that as defined by Dr. Martineau, Karsondas was a godly man. There are many who speak the names of Ram and Krishna, who count the beads on their rosaries, and make a show of their religion by observing all formal ceremonies of religion but, who are not true in thought and just in their conduct. Such persons are really irreligious. Speaking about Charles Bradlaugh, in his centenary celebrations, the Rev. Arthur Mursell said: "I am indebted to one whom the world calls an atheist, and who accepts the designation, but whom, in

social intimacy, I would rather call my friend than thousands of Christians whom I know; a man who while casting doubt on Him whom I call my Master, has shown more of His spirit in the practical intercourse of life than many a champion of orthodoxy." In the case of Charles Darwin, on paper, he must be written down a heretic; but in reality, he was one of the loyalist of all believers. As F. J. Gould says about him: "Without a church, he was pious. Without an altar, he worshipped truth. Without a Bible he found knowledge. Without commandments, he loved mercy. And without a Creed he had faith in man. We see in his example, how a man ought to be judged by his life and character rather than by the standard of established religion." So far as Karsondas was concerned, in all his writings, in all the replies he gave to several addresses that were presented to him, he has always mentioned God. Even ten days before his death, he wrote a letter from Limree, on 19th August 1871, to Sheth Bengali in which among other matters he wrote: "I have every hope of recovery from illness, and you need not feel anxious about it. But should it please God to call me in His presence I have no doubt that you will take care of my family." Throughout his life, Karsondas hated shams; and there is no reason to believe that in his last letter to his trusted friend, he was speaking an untruth. I wonder why an experienced writer like Navalram should have at all referred to it when in all his works and by all his public deeds Karsondas had given clearest proofs that he had faith in God and faith in His having entrusted him with the special mission of being an instructor of his people.

Some reformers, out of over-zeal for the cause of widow re-marriage; secured the consent of a Brahmin

by offering him some inducements, to marry a widow named Diwali. The marriage was celebrated. For some time, the Brahmin passed his time merrily, spending the money he got at the time of his marriage. When that source of income was exhausted, he deserted his wife, and thenceforward she became miserable. The Brahmin got himself re-admitted into his caste. The reformers saw their mistake, but, they were not disappointed, but continued their efforts. It is not known what part Karsondas had in bringing about this widow re-marriage among Brahmins. Rao Saheb Mahipatram has introduced this episode in Karsondas's biography, but he has not mentioned distinctly Karsondas's share in this sorry incident. He has not mentioned also where this marriage took place. Without definitely knowing Karsondas's share in this incident, it was wrong to have introduced it in the biography. The strange thing is that just after this he has narrated the incident of another re-marriage of a noble type, brought about by the good offices of Karsondas. The whole tenor of Karsondas's life is of so ennobling a nature, that I do not give any credence whatsoever to the story of Diwalibai. When Madhavdas Raghunathdas's first wife died, Karsondas advised him to marry a suitable virgin. This advice he had given, because in the state of society of the ignorant Baniyas of that time, Karsondas must have found it difficult to find out any young Baniya widow of a respectable family coming forward to re-marry. If this was the state of the orthodox Baniyas, what to speak of the Brahmin community in which orthodoxy was more prevalent than in that of the Baniya community? It was likely that some hasty, inexperienced reformer must have taken this step or it was very likely

hat some orthodox party must have put up the Brahmin of feign before reformers his zeal for widow re-marriage, o that after marriage, when the Brahmin would turn traitor to the cause, the reformers' party might suffer much and their cause might be discredited in the eyes of the public. I could never believe for a moment that a shrewd man like Karsondas who had lived his whole public career with so great wisdom and tact and whose whole life was based on the most fundamental traits of a great character like Truth and Purity would ever rush in for such a stupid and ill-advised action to get name and fame. Karsondas had already earned an enviable reputation as a prominent practical reformer. What then could be his motive for taking this action? I do not believe that Karsondas could have any hand in bringing about this widow re-marriage. If the step was taken by other reformers by using means which were not honourable, the blame should not be laid at Karsondas's door.

I will now deal with another controversial point in Karsondas's public career.

Karsondas's biographer Mahipatram has raised an important controversial point, viz: it was proper for Karsondas to have continued the work in which he had so signally succeeded. His version was that if the Bombay reformers had kept up the work for a sufficiently long time, a work in which they had at great trouble, at great expense, and at great risk achieved an unprecedented triumph, then the rotten, immoral system called Pushti Marga' of the Maharajas would have been destroyed and its place would have been supplied by a rational form of worship. His view was that Karsondas should

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not have diverted his energies in doing an ordinary work of preparing a Dictionary, which any other man of ordinary literary merit would have been able to do. Further, Karsondas ought not to have thought of going to England as an ordinary man, in order to earn money. By the result of the Maharaja Libel Case, an ordinary teacher and editor had richly earned fame, both in his own country and also in foreign countries. On all sides, people had begun to shower praises on his morals, his steadfastness, his zeal for improving the status of his country, his powers of endurance, his powers of discriminating right from wrong and his other good qualities. He was respected as a reformer of sterling merit. In spite of the Maharajas' untiring efforts to have him ex-communicated from the Kapole caste, they had failed to achieve their object. Both Vaishnavas and practically the whole of the Kapole community cherished bitterest hatred against Karsondas; to such an extent, the relations between them and Karsondas were strained that one could safely say that life-long enmity had sprung up between them, and the Rao Saheb's version was that by going to England after his victory in the Libel Case, Karsondas gave a handle to his enemies to ex-communicate both him and his family from their own caste and also from the wider fold of the Baniya Mahajan. His view was that by remaining in the caste, Karsondas ought to have persisted in a line of work which he had chalked out for himself, and should have tenaciously stuck to it, and then the result of the Case would not have been temporary but permanent. His opinion was that Karsondas ought not to have come down from the high pedestal of a national hero to the low position of an ordinary status of a partner in a money-making concern. Karsondas ought

to have founded a new reformed sect, and that work would have been the crowning point of his career.

At first sight, this plea appears to be sweetly reasonable, and one feels inclined to concur with Rao Sahab Mahipatram; but when one looks deep into the matter and considers all phases and circumstances of the situation, one is obliged to come to the conclusion that it was right on the part of Karsondas not to have ventured dabbling in matters in which he was a mere child. One has at the same time to confess that it was in the fitness of things, the right psychological moment for the reformers to have continued the work in which they had succeeded so well. Some able reformer, well steeped in religious lore, ought to have come forward. So far as Karsondas was concerned, one must say that the criticism levelled against him was not justified.

I will now offer a few remarks in justification of the view I have taken. Karsondas had started his Paper 'Satya Prakash' only with the purpose of enlightening his countrymen with the right views on moral and social reforms. Karsondas had never dabbled in religious controversy. It was only when the 'Chappan Bhog' controversy commenced, that he thought of exposing the immoralities of the sect of the Maharajas, because he was himself one of the sect. He carried on the controversy only on grounds of truth and purity. It was only after the controversy between Jadunathji and Narmadashanker that the controversy took a religious turn, and ultimately ended in a controversy about religion, pure and simple. In the Conspiracy Case and in the Libel case, in his evidence, Karsondas distinctly gave out his views as follows: "I consider that publi-

cation (article of 21st October 1860 in the Satya Prakash) would conduce to public morality. The tyranny and evil practices of the Maharajas induced me to write against them. My object in writing was to get the Maharajas reformed. I am somewhat familiar with the doctrine of the ancient Hindu religion. I used to visit temples about ten or eleven years ago. I have not been to the temples, since 1848, because I knew that the Maharajas' conduct was blameworthy. I saw the toes of the females pressed three or four times when I myself went to touch the Maharaja's toes. I did not mark this when I was young, that is under fifteen. This circumstance, combined with their general reputation as regards adultery, made me secede from the Maharajas. Jeevanji is still my Guru, but I have stopped visiting him. I look upon the Maharajas as spiritual guides, not as Gods. I make a distinction between worshipping the Maharaj as God, and worshipping him as a spiritual guide. I have a daughter round whose neck I put a "Kanthee" myself, according to the ceremonial forms of my sect. I have given considerable attention to the religion of the Vallabhcharya sect, and am acquainted with the 'Brij Bhasha' language. I am not acquainted with Sanskrit."

Karsondas was a social reformer. Before he started his own paper, he had been writing on different subjects to improve his own countrymen. His was the work of a social agitator. This role he continued even after he had founded his own paper, and he noticed that the press agitation was producing tangible results. The facts that in 1855 Bhattias had met and resolved to devise means to stop the Maharajas' misconduct, that when Maharajas were approached by respectable Indians

with a request to stop their immoralities, the Maharajas admitted their misbehaviour, but expressed their inability to stop the evil, because their income depended upon the lady members of the families of Vaishnavas, that at the time of the 'Chappan Bhog' controversy Vaishnavas had boldly attempted to formulate their grievances and presented them to the Maharajas, that the Maharajas on their part had agreed to redress them but wanted one year's time, and that Sheth Gopaldas Madhavdas, the Sheth of the Baniya Mahajan did not obey the unreasonable demands of the Maharajas for stopping the patronage of the Brahmins, were unmistakable proofs that the reformers' agitation was producing good results. Even when the 'Slavery Bond' was prepared, most of the Vaishnava votaries as a body declined to subscribe to a clause in the Bond, whereby the votaries of the Maharajas were to be compelled neither to subscribe nor read papers writing against Maharajas, so that the Maharajas were obliged to drop that clause, showed that the social reform was making headway. At the time of the Libel case, although Bhattias convened their caste meeting to arrange so that Bhattia witnesses may not give evidence against the Maharaja in the Libel Case, Baniyas, owing to the silent influence of Karsondas's paper, did not dare follow suit, although Sheths of the Baniya community were approached to effect this object. When one reads the following portion in Mr. Mathuradas Lowji's evidence, one finds that reformers rightly practised disobedience towards their spiritual guides when their commands were not good: "I stayed for about four years with Plaintiff at the house of Jeewraj Goloo. He also sent for me on other occasions, and on the first occasion, I had some discussion

cation (article of 21st October 1860 in the Satya Prakash) would conduce to public morality. The tyranny and evil practices of the Maharajas induced me to write against them. My object in writing was to get the Maharajas reformed. I am somewhat familiar with the doctrine of the ancient Hindu religion. I used to visit temples about ten or eleven years ago. I have not been to the temples, since 1848, because I knew that the Maharajas' conduct was blameworthy. I saw the toes of the females pressed three or four times when I myself went to touch the Maharaja's toes. I did not mark this when I was young, that is under fifteen. This circumstance, combined with their general reputation as regards adultery, made me secede from the Maharajas. Jeevanji is still my Guru, but I have stopped visiting him. I look upon the Maharajas as spiritual guides, not as Gods. I make a distinction between worshipping the Maharaj as God, and worshipping him as a spiritual guide. I have a daughter round whose neck I put' a "Kanthee" myself, according to the ceremonial forms of my sect. I have given considerable attention to the religion of the Vallabhcharya sect, and am acquainted with the 'Brij Bhasha' language. I am not acquainted with Sanskrit."

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with him on the subject of female education in the course of which he desired me to do as he or the Maharajas directed. I said we were not bound to do so, unless what you say is good. He said we were bound to act according to what they said. I said I could show him precedents from the Shastras, upon which he desired me to see him at his house." Karsondas was one of the band of the Hindu reformers; and from the beginning his attention was directed to bring about both moral and social reforms. The portions of the evidence given above showed Karsondas's limitations as regards his knowledge of religious matters. He, never at any time of his life, thought of starting a new sect, because from the evidence recorded above, it appears that he continued to be a member of the sect, continued to believe the Maharajas as his own spiritual guides, continued to follow the ritual of tying 'Kanthee' to his children as enjoined by the Sect of Maharajas. While Karsondas was at Limree, he used to visit Vaishnava temples, thus showing that he continued down till his death a staunch Vaishnava, with the only difference that he, believing in the images like other Vaishnavas, did not believe Maharajas to be incarnations of God, unlike others. Karsondas had intense hatred against immorality, and it was for this very reason, that he had dared to attempt the reformation of the sect to which he belonged. Karsondas cherished no doubt the ideal of having a rational form of worship, but openly admitted in his writings that "the obstacles in the way of a thorough revolution are great, but not insurmountable." Karsondas had done his part, he intensely longed to see a rational, pure form of worship of the Deity introduced, but did not think that he was the right sort of person to accomplish that end. The Libel Case forced him to defend his

position and he did that wonderfully well, and thereby exposed the immoralities practised by the Maharajas, but beyond that, he was not qualified to go, and it was for that very purpose, that just after his victory, he took again to his favourite work for which he was properly qualified. I am supported in the view I have taken, both by Sjt. Mansukharam Suryaram and Sjt. Navalram Lukshmiram.

#### NAVALRAM LAKSHMIRAM'S VIEW:—

"To the question, why he did not carry on agitation for religious reform, the proper reply to our mind is that Karsondas was not constitutionally inclined to be a religious reformer. It is true that he was a good social reformer. To be one of the religious founders requires qualities of a much superior type, and higher aims and thoughts than those possessed by Karsondas. We do not know that he had leanings even towards being a religious reformer. He had neither religious zeal nor the requisite knowledge of religion; and we do not find any trace of this kind of knowledge from his whole biography. We do not think, if Karsondas had persisted in effecting religious reform, without being fully tinctured with strong religious feelings with the ultimate view of promoting social reform, any good results would have accrued. We do not think Karsondas committed a mistake in leaving the mighty work of a religious reformer for the energies of some better-qualified person than himself and in spending his time in effecting social reform. Wherever Karsondas had gone he had never neglected the carrying on of social reform."

#### MANSUKHRAM SURYARAM'S VIEW:—

"There is a great difference between destruction and production or construction. The first is easy, but



the other two are difficult. In the fact of Karsondas having not undertaken the mighty work of founding a new religious sect, we see his fore-sightedness. From this it appears that he had correctly gauged the intensity of his powers. We see from this that he had neither pride of his own knowledge nor obstinacy in sticking to his own opinions. To expect good results without being qualified to achieve the same is not the work of a sensible person. To found a new religious association is not so easy a task as people imagine. Let people, who have no understanding of the great importance of the unique position which religion holds in our life, think what they may, yet those who have little understanding about the great importance of religion will see clearly that it is only people of extraordinary ability who are qualified to undertake this work.....It is not a child's play either to found a new religion or to give proper religious instruction."

#### THE GOLDEN MEAN.

Throughout my remarks in this chapter about social reform, I have used the expression 'social' in a most liberal and comprehensive sense, including therein everything that makes for the social well-being of a citizen.

The questions that go to make up social reformation or social efficiency are in the words of Lecky, "a pure domestic life, a high standard of moral worth and of public spirit, simple habits, courage, uprightness and a certain soundness and moderation of judgment which springs quite as much from character as from intellect." The aim of Indian reformers should, therefore, generally be to awaken the public social conscience and to strike at the root of all customs and institutions which contribute to any or all of those qualities, or are capable

of being made to contribute to that end. They must strengthen those qualities that are beneficial and remove those that are not. Further, Indian social reformers who have come in contact with Western civilization have to use their reason to decide how they should strike a mean between the past and the present. Karsondas did strike this mean, a quarter of a century ago, on lines laid down by the Hon. T. Muthuswami Aiyar, C.I.E., Judge of the High Court in his Convocation Address at the Madras University in 1882, wherein he said:—

“ Social progress is and must be, if I may so call it, a continuous development. The development in the past offers to you a rich inheritance, though it is also attended with peculiar dangers. In the great mass of general principles underlying the social system in this country, many of which are the products of exigencies felt in archaic and other stirring times of which we can now have but an imperfect notion, there will assuredly be a mixture of error which may operate on men’s minds with the traditional power of immemorial prescription and may from the very reverence due to age easily obtain dominion over you. It would be folly either to abandon from indolence or self-complacency the advantage of your position and to build up an entirely new social system, even if it were possible to do so, or to accept what is, as the best that can be had, on the authority of prescription. To avoid the danger, it is necessary to examine anew the whole body of what has descended to you from the past and to question and trace each element to its origin. The proper spirit in which such work should be undertaken, is, to borrow from a philosophic jurist, one of intellectual freedom, of independence of all authority; but this sense of freedom

should not degenerate into arrogant dogmatism, but should be tempered by that feeling of humility which would result from an unbiased contemplation of your limited individual powers. "

Karsondas, as a reformer, chalked out new and wholesome ways which had not been attempted in his community at all. He used his reason in striking a right balance between what was old and what was new. He believed in social evolution rather in social revolution. He fully surveyed the whole social field and ascertained by study and personal contact, the defects he found among his countrymen and tried, through his tongue and pen, to make them first realize their weak state, before he could make them accept the remedies; and while doing so, he exercised great restraint, both in his speech and action. He never painted the picture of people's bad state in too black colours so as to make their energies paralyzed. He did not draw lines of demarcation between one kind of reform and another. He was of opinion that Indian reform in all directions should proceed together; but while he held this opinion, he almost confined his own energies to the work of bringing about social reforms as distinct from political reforms, so that his work may produce proper effect. He firmly believed that the Hindu social institutions of the past were susceptible of progressive re-adaptations, and were not so inelastic or crystallized as they were sometimes reputed to be. He knew that generally people were conservative and therefore they had apathy and indifference towards reforms, and that it befitted reformers to constantly and persistently hammer their views on different social problems in various forms and ways. He did not think it beneficial

for his community that he should specialize in removing only one kind of social defect or vice. He aimed to renovate, to purify and to perfect the whole man so as to improve his social condition. In his social crusade, he had great faith in God, and with this faith in him, he was fearless. He exemplified in his person the saying: Faith is with the fearless and fear is with the faithless. It was his conviction that apart from a daily feeding upon God's faithfulness, apart from the constant joyful, trustful appropriation of God's free favour, the life of service cannot be sustained. He recognised his duty to his countrymen to be of the very essence of his religion. He firmly believed that man simply cannot bring any offering to the altar of God, except the offering of his life-body, mind and spirit-to give in service to his country and countrymen. Karsondas did not care what the public thought of his work; he cared only to satisfy his own vigilant conscience. He did not expect to see his reform work produce immediate effects. He worked in the full faith that if what little he was doing, helped posterity, his work was usefully done. In his campaign, he laid greatest stress on education. He held ignorance to be the real mother of evil. Education of the right sort—one that not only fills the head but awakens the heart—was held by him to be the great panacea of all social evils. He recognized education as the only lever that could move the dead weight of custom and superstition and considered it to be the best method of preparing the minds to which one could appeal with success in the long run. He believed that social reform was not to be secured by noise and shouting, by complaints and denunciations, by formation of parties or making

of revolutions, but by awakening of thought and the progress of ideas. He influenced his fellows most deeply; he spoke what seemed true to him, and left the result with God. He had victorious faith in the Truth as he saw it. He did not, like ignorant people, leave everything to time as if time was a living active agent to do or undo things. He believed that mere time could do nothing, but that it was individuals that must do everything. He knew the proper time when to strike hard and when to be silent. He did not wait for others to join. He made a good beginning. He did not care to have long visions. He practised what he saw and took the next step that seemed to him right, irrespective of his seeing any further or not; and he found that, in following this method; steps after steps opened out as he went along the way. He was not of the class of timid men who looking at evils say: "Some others ought to do it, but why should we?" On the other hand, Karsondas's view was "Some one ought to do it: why not I?" And as an earnest reformer he eagerly came forward to face some perilous duty. He generally did not believe in bringing about social reform through legislation; but in the matter of eradicating the gross immoralities of the Vaishnava Maharajas, he desired the intervention of legislature. In this matter, his views coincide with those of the late Justice Ranade, who said: "Wherever there is a large amount of unredressed evil suffered by people who cannot adopt their own remedy, the State has a function to regulate and minimize the evil, if by so regulating it, the evil can be minimized better than by individual effort and without leading to other worse abuses. The State in its collective capacity represents the power, the wisdom,

the mercy and charity, of its best citizens. What a single man, or a combination of men can best do on their own account, that the State may not do; but it cannot shirk its duty if it sees its way to remedy evils, which no private combination of men can check adequately or which it can deal with more speedily and effectively than any private combination of men can do. In these latter cases, the State's regulating action has its sphere of duty marked out clearly." So far as foreign travel reform was concerned Karsondas did not like the plea advanced by some to wait till the proper time arrived. After his experience at the time of the "Chhapan Bhog" controversy, and during the course of the Maharaj Libel Case, and after his and his family's persecution by the caste, Karsondas ever cherished a deep belief that his times were the best to give a death blow to the hoary institution of caste. He saw clearly that in his time the essential virtues of caste were given up and all its latent vices had full play. He agreed with Sir H. S. Maine that caste was "the most disastrous and blighting of human institutions." Long after Karsondas, India's illustrious poet, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, pronounced his most emphatic opinion against caste in these ever memorable words:

"The regeneration of the Indian people, to my mind, directly and perhaps solely depends upon the removal of this condition of caste. When I realise the hypnotic hold this gigantic system of cold-blooded repression has taken on the minds of our people, whose social body it has so completely entwined in its endless evils that the free expression of manhood, even under the direst necessity, has become almost an impossibility, the only remedy that suggests itself to me is to educate them out.

of their trance.....Must we not have that greater vision of humanity which will impel us to shake off the fetters that shackle our individual life before we begin to dream of national freedom?"

Karsondas, with his deep insight saw that the caste system was atomizing, segmenting and fragmenting the forces of society, and therefore he desired these to melt away as early as possible, if India was ever to increase her social efficiency. He said as follows: "In our country, great works of reform have been obstructed by these caste fetters. When with a big blow, these fetters are torn asunder, then all roads to reform will be opened".

#### HARMONIZING THEORY WITH PRACTICE.

This showed that Karsondas had a deep insight into the causes of social decay and the causes of very slow social progress of his caste, community and country. He did not like the work of social reform being left to chance and circumstances, but wished that all reformers should always keep before their minds' eyes, the goal of their endeavours and by regular, continuous and persistent efforts to create and regulate the forces and direct them in such a way as to gain the desired end. In his work as a reformer, wherever possible, he took also help of orthodox spiritual heads. He never preached any kind of reform that he did not practise himself. His view was that the reform movement was not succeeding well because many of the reformers were preaching one thing and practising another. He was in favour of starting a Society for giving help and encouragement to reformers. He did not trust too much to the machinery of laws and institutions, but considered them only as weapons in the hands of reformers to be used with no more wisdom than that which

they possessed. He believed that the world was always only the sum of its units, so being good or bad as its individuals were good or bad. He was of opinion that reformers should seek to know the laws of right and wrong, and to these they should render willing obedience. Sir Oliver Lodge has said in his valuable work named "Modern Problems" as follows: "Knowledge is a necessary preliminary to reform, but in the exigency of life people cannot wait, as in the applications of chemistry or physics they can, for a fully established and systematic theory before they take action; they must get what knowledge they can, they must encourage experts to devote their lives to serious study and to accumulate and dissect and assimilate facts, but meanwhile they must themselves proceed tentatively and experimentally to put their ideas into practice, to bring them to the test of experience, to apply the methods of trial and error, to learn by mistakes, trying only to make those mistakes as few as possible, not hoping to avoid them altogether. And so must the theory and the practice, the acquisition of knowledge and its application, go hand in hand and simultaneously, one amid the storm and stress of actual existence. The practical man and the theorist must live side by side, and both must be active; often, indeed, their attributes can be combined in one and the same person." Karsondas acted in this wise. He thought much, but did not like to dwell only in thoughts of reforms. Any good thought and desire that he did not endeavour to translate into action was considered by him as an idle speculation. The only criticism that one can reasonably level against Karsondas was that he was too much ahead of his times. Nearly seven years after Karsondas's death, his biographer, Mahapatram, mentions that the vitriolic



persecution to which Karsondas was subjected by his caste and the Mahajan and their Headmen or Shethias resulted in the fact that till now (1877) no Baniya is able to go to England. Sir Oliver Lodge says: "It is no use going too fast for him, no use being too far ahead of the time; anything achieved under those conditions is likely to be upset by the return swing of the pendulum. Social progress is only sure and lasting when the average citizen is ripe for it, when he is carried along by the reformers and realizes the benefit of what has been done. Society cannot be reconstructed from outside, it must be reconstructed from within, it must in a manner reconstruct itself, or it will be unstable. This is the whole problem, this is the real and noble difficulty in dealing with self-conscious material and free agents. They cannot with wisdom be coerced, they must be led; and this process takes time, and that is the reason why progress is so slow. Machines can be managed on the coercion principle, but not men. Omnipotence itself could not with wisdom reform mankind faster than they desire to be reformed, nor can it permanently impose upon them conditions which they are incompetent to assimilate." This is one view of the reform problem; but when we take facts into consideration, I must admit that the plea of Karsondas was the right one.

#### PIONEERS IN FOREIGN TRAVEL.

In the beginning of 1781, Hanmantrao was sent to England by Raghunathrao Peshwa; then in the year 1830, Samaldas Desai of Nadiad had been there. The former was sent by his master to get some grievance relating to his reign redressed, the latter had gone on business relating to his jagir. On the Bengal side, Ram Mohan Roy had been there in 1830. Other Bengalis, few in number followed, chief among them being Dr. Chukkerbutty. In

1856, one Govind Vithal had gone there for the Civil Service examination. In 1860, Mahipatram Rupram visited Great Britain to get personal knowledge of the ways in which the schools in that country were conducted. We thus see that among the Gujaratis, Karsondas was the third gentleman to go to England. Rao Saheb Mahipatram was persecuted by his caste, and Karsondas knew that he would have to meet with the same fate. In spite of this, Karsondas was the first Baniya to travel to England. He was the pioneer in the Baniya community. Long after Karsondas, the way of foreign travel was not opened, therefore no blame should be attached to Karsondas's conduct. He suffered intensely for this adventure of his. After his death, through the good offices of Sheth Bengali and Sheth Dosabhai Faramji Karaka, after a year and a half, the family was re-admitted to the fold of the Kapole caste, after the whole family having been punished in the following ways: The family was fined and the members of the family were compelled to go to Nasik for performing the 'Prayschit' ceremony. Yet it must be admitted that the sweet fruits that we now enjoy would not have been enjoyed in our times, but for the seed that Karsondas sowed in the year 1863. Karsondas had discerned what he was fit for, so that he might settle down to his own work, or patiently wait for his own place, without enviously striving to rob every other man of his own crown and so losing his own. Karsondas was a true patriot. True patriotic love was not with him a blind affection; he saw clearly the faults of the country he loved, and cared little for its praise, much for the fulfilment of its highest vocation. The best way to love one's country was, he believed, to love all the ideas on which the progress of the race depended and to live one's life on their behalf, to devote

one's being to them, and to offer on their altar all we were. This was the patriotism of humanity. He understood his personal responsibility to so great an extent that he said to himself: 'There may be a hundred others close beside me, but not one of them can take my place, or do my duty, or fulfil my mission, or bear my responsibility.' He understood full well that no other person except himself could love his life, do his work, meet his obligations, bear his burdens. He was a valiant reformer. He was loyal to his ideals and to the dominant purpose of his life. He believed that doing good was a faculty which he must exercise, otherwise it would become weak, atrophied and palsied for want of use. Hence the true nobility of his life was that he was ever helping and serving. He was ever hopeful about the results of his deeds. He had enthusiasm for the cherished plans of his life. Enthusiasm signifies "God in us". It was this God-spirit, animating him that made him forgetful of self, regardless of personal suffering, proof against ridicule and opposition in the pursuit of his ideals. He had had the courage of his opinions, to form them and to keep by them when formed. He had the courage of endurance, to bear all hardship without flinching. It was correctly said that to yield to temptation was base and destructive; to run away from it, was prudent and safe; to resist it was manly and invigorating. Karsondas had the courage of resistance—the power to say 'no' to any form of temptation. He had the courage to be honest and to speak the truth, to be what he really was, and not to pretend to be what he was not. In short, he had that kind of determination to hold his own, to face danger, without flinching to go straight on his way against opposing forces, neither

turning to the right hand nor to the left. He threw himself heart and soul into all those enterprises that were for the benefit of society and thereby he discharged in a very special way the duties of good citizenship. He had a golden temper. He was a mirror of courtesy. He was not at all ashamed to confess where he was wrong. He was justly proud of the noble heritage of his people, and it was his cherished ideal that his country should attain its pristine glory by giving up all harmful accretions that had in the course of ages marred its beauty. He had patience and perseverance that are proverbially said to overcome mountains. He had tact and sympathy. He pointed out the faults of his people in a spirit of love and affection. He knew full well that reformers could not command strength of numbers, and hence it was essential that they should command earnestness of conviction, singleness of devotion and readiness of self-sacrifice. He knew how to bear and forbear. He bore all ridicule, insults, even personal injuries at times, but never retaliated. All this he bore for the sake of the objects he wanted to realize in life. He chose right with the most invincible resolution, he resisted the sorest temptation from within and without, he bore the heaviest burdens cheerfully; he was calmest in storms and most fearless under menaces and frowns. His reliance on truth, virtue and God was most unflinching. He was a gentleman in the following sense in which an author has defined a gentleman as "one who thinks about the wants of others as well as about his own, who delights in helping others, those especially who cannot help themselves, who makes allowances for the erring, and tries to raise the fallen, who cannot be bribed to do a dirty action or bullied to

tell a lie; one who has gentleness and manliness, a child's heart in a brave man's breast."

" Wherever he went he sought  
To make the world within his reach  
Something the better for his being  
And gladder for his human speech".

Here it has been deemed necessary to deal only with the subject of reforms. From the detailed manner in which the subject has been treated, one would think that Hindus, having so many social defects and drawbacks in other walks of life, as compared with the residents of other civilised countries, must be in a condition of very low civilisation. In this connection, it is essential to disabuse the minds of Asiatics and Europeans who may be carried away by prejudiced opinions against Hindus. I would therefore like to give out here the views of some prominent Europeans and the view of one eminent Indian.

#### RICH HERITAGE OF HINDUS.

In 1813, Colonel Thomas Munro, having had 32 years' service in India, said: "If civilisation is to become an article of trade between the two countries, I am convinced that this country (England) will gain by the import cargo". Abbe J. A. Dubois, Missionary in Mysore, said in 1820: "It has at present become a kind of fashion to speak of improvements and ameliorations in the civilisations and institutions of the Hindoos, and every one has his own plans for effecting them; but if we could for an instant lay aside our European eyes and European prejudices, and look at the Hindoos with some degree of impartiality, we should perhaps find that they are nearly our equals in all that is good, and our inferiors

only in all that is bad. In my humble opinion, these people have reached the degree of civilisation that is consistent with their climate, their wants, their natural dispositions and physical constitution; and in fact, in education, in manners, in accomplishments, and in the discharge of social duties, I believe them superior to some European nations, and scarcely inferior to any." In 1887, Sir M. Monier Williams, K. C. I. E., etc., said: "I am deeply convinced that the more we learn about the ideas, feelings, drift of thought, religious and intellectual development, eccentricities, and even errors of the people of India, the less ready shall we be to judge them by our own conventional European standards—the less disposed to regard ourselves as the sole depositories of all true knowledge, learning, virtue, and refinement of civilised life—the less prone to despise as an ignorant and inferior race of men who compiled the laws of Manu, one of the most remarkable literary productions of the world." Raja Sir. T. Madhav Row expresses the following opinion: "I say this with the confidence inspired by long study, observation and experience. My belief is that if a competent committee of philosophers were appointed to compare the Hindus with other civilised communities, its verdict would be very largely in favour of the Hindus in point of social and domestic virtues generally. The Hindus, of course, have some serious failings. But taking the net result, that is, virtues minus failings, they, the Hindus, will take a high place in the comparison."

#### PIONEER WORK.

I will now like to offer some general remarks about Karsondas's career as an Indian reformer. Karsondas died at the early age of 38. During his twenty years' career, he did what it was humanly possible for him to

do. He discharged his [stewardship quite conscientiously. I have narrated several reforms introduced by Karsondas, both while he was living in Bombay and also while he lived at Deesa, Rajkot and Limree; but leaving aside all minor reforms, to the credit of Karsondas stood the following three mighty reforms, I say, mighty, advisedly:—(1) The pioneer work of the reformation of the spiritual guides of the sect of the Maharajas and the protection of the chastity of the Gujarati Vaishnava women from the immoralities of their ignorant and illiterate Gurus; (3) The pioneer work of the emancipation of Gujarati women who were suffering untold woes of enforced widowhood; (2) The pioneer work of paving the way of Baniyas for Foreign Travel. As regards the first great reform, he preached what he practised. As regards the second, at great sacrifice, he put into practice, after full seven years, the ideas he openly gave out in 1853 when he read a paper on foreign travel before an influential meeting held under the auspices of the B. H. Sabha. Regarding the third, no occasion had arisen to put that reform into practice in his own family. As regards the question of re-marriage of widows, how his great work was too much ahead of the times we have seen. It was carried through successfully, but the result of it was that after the first re-marriage, out of 60 re-marriages celebrated among the Baniyas, Bhattias and Gujarati and Deccanee Brahmins, nearly 20 were brought about by Madhavdas Raghunathdas and at his own expense. The credit of all this noble work should be given to Karsondas, because he was the pioneer who had dared to bring about the first widow re-marriage among the Baniyas. When Madhavdas

and his wife Dhankore came to know of Karsondas's death, the sentiments of great grief they expressed showed how valuable Karsondas's help and guidance to them were.

For showing the inferiority of Hindu women, a writer says:—"As infants, less cared for; as girls, less educated; as married ladies, shut out of the world; always more or less victimised by ignorance and superstition in life's race, India's women carry a heavy handicap." He further mentions:—"In five respects, the social inferiority of the females exists apparently, viz.—in the illiteracy of females, in marriage before womanhood, in polygamy, in the seclusion of women and in the prohibition of the marriage of widows." Karsondas agitated for a reformation of the condition of Hindu women. But of the three great reforms that he introduced, two were solely for their benefit, and the other mainly for their benefit. The orthodox Hindus were dealing with the question of widow remarriage very unfairly. Though no doubt, through the mighty efforts of the late Raja Ram Mohan Roy, widows were saved from being burnt alive, yet their lot in life, owing to enforced widowhood, was terrible indeed. To save them from this ordeal, Karsondas took the noble step of bringing about this first widow re-marriage among Baniyas. When one looks at this work of reform, carried out under heavy odds, one feels proud to admire the author of it and call him a true patriot, a real reformer, and a noble hero. We have seen that Karsondas's father was living at the time of the Maharaja Libel Case and was dead against Karsondas's work as a reformer. Besides, Karsondas' third wife was a sort of a thorn in his flesh. Mahipatram wrote



about her: "Personally Karsondas felt little discomfort without their (castemen's) society, but it was not so with his wife. Her anxiety to rejoin the caste was a constant source of disturbance in his house. Though her enlightened husband rightly considered it a glory to be forced by ignorant men to remain out of caste for having visited England, she felt herself miserable, and always complained of it." Practically the whole Kapole Baniya caste was against Karsondas for his views on reform and for the practical steps he had taken to carry them out. Karsondas was not a man of means. The whole of the Vaishnava fold, after the Maharaja Libel Case, became Karsondas's bitterest enemy. Out of nearly two hundred reformers to be found in the city of Bombay, there were indeed very few rare souls of his community who helped him in all times of need. Several rich friends of his, at one time had befriended him, but at another time proved to be timid souls. It is only when we view Karsondas's career amidst the dark times through which he lived and the terrible environment he had to encounter that we can come to appreciate the work of reform that he was able to carry through, in his short term of life. It is said that great men have short biographies. Karsondas was a great man and during the short period of twenty years, he agitated intensely so as to influence public opinion and carried through important social reforms of which the above-named three were the greatest. His reforms have not produced as much effect as one would naturally expect and this was because every one of the great reforms that he advocated and carried out was too much ahead of the times. For this Karsondas was not to be blamed; but he deserved, on the score of being the first to lay his hands on the great

social evils of his society, the greatest gratitude from both his countrymen and countrywomen. Mr. F. S. P. Lely gave tribute to Karsondas in the following words:—  
 “We need never despair of our beloved India so long as she can produce sons like this—brave without conceit, vigorous without passion, independent yet courteous, loving his countrymen yet caring nothing for mob applause, pure in life, valiant in fight, unassuming and modest in daily life—a true hero.” Mr. Lely concluding his lecture on Karsondas said: “Gentlemen, it will be a bad sign if India ever willingly lets die the name of such a man as Karsondas.”

Let us now see how Karsondas's countrymen have treated his work. I do not know for how many years Karsondas's anniversary was celebrated. It is certain that full six years passed before Karsondas's friend wrote a short biography styling the same as “Excellent Kapole Karsondas Mulji.” I do not know in what way his community in which there are several multi-millionaires have cared to perpetuate the memory of their great caste-brother. It is a pity that even Mahipatram's biography of Karsondas is not to be had at all. All of Karsondas's Gujarati and English works cannot be had at any one place. I have failed to secure from any one a single original letter written in Karsondas's own hand. Karsondas was the only true Gujarati reformer. He belonged to a community noted for its wealth and philanthropy; yet no Kapole has arranged for the writing of an English biography to be placed in the hands of the young generation all these years. It is a matter of great rejoicing that even after a hundred years, prominent citizens of Bombay have made amends for their past indifference. The kind of treatment meted out to the only solitary hero of our

community did not speak well of our public spirit. The main work of Karsondas's life was to effect moral and social reforms. It is the duty of each and any man and woman who joined in the Centenary celebration to consecrate himself or herself to the forwarding of the great liberating and progressive causes for which Karsondas stood and served.

### OUR DEBT OF GRATITUDE.

I take the liberty of offering a few suggestions to the public about their duties towards their illustrious countryman, by discharging which they will be benefiting only themselves.

A few words first to the members of the Gujarati community:—

The social reform movement in the Gujarati community is a matter of immense magnitude, and there is ample work for the energies of hundreds of young men and women. It requires to be tackled by wisest heads of the community and this could be done by having periodical conferences to be followed by systematic work throughout the year. It is a matter of shame and regret that after Karsondas, the Gujarati community has not produced another hero of his type. In order that one of that type, nay of a nobler type may spring up, it behoves the members of the Gujarati community to see that Karsondas's biography is printed and sold in thousands for the benefit of the rising generation. Karsondas advocated the formation of a Society for giving help and encouragement to reformers. Let such a society be founded for Gujaratis only and let this Society take upon itself both the holding of conferences and also the doing of theoretical and

practical work of a continuous character from day to day.

A few words to the members of the Hindu and other communities.

I know of only one statue of a social reformer in the city of Bombay and that is of the late Justice Ranade. Let earnest men and women exert their best to see that a life-size statue of Karsondas is erected in some prominent part of Bombay. Let not the Bombay citizens think that they have done their duty only by celebrating this Centenary. The second suggestion to them is: the prize essays written for the Karsondas Mulji Memorial fund, from year to year, should be regularly printed from a separate fund, because the reading of these essays is in itself a good method of enlightening public opinion. Sir Oliver Lodge has written: "It is a matter of common observation that young people have many of them a keen and generous appreciation of, and feel a yearning towards, a more ideal state of things, until they get dazed and bewildered and disheartened by the selfish condition of life as it is, and fall back into the customary routine of conventional concurrence with the general trend of society. Hence if social problems and difficulties and reforms could be introduced to and contemplated by ingenuous youth, before they become sophisticated by false traditions and imbued with selfish and pecuniary interests, much might be achieved." My third suggestion to them, therefore, is that there should be an institution where the plastic minds of young men and women may be properly guided in matters of reform so that they may prove themselves useful citizens when they grow old.

My desire in making these suggestions is merely to see that the Centenary celebration results in something substantial so that the noble influence of the great Gujarati reformer who did so much for us is not lost forever.

### A GREAT PERSONALITY.

The success that Karsondas achieved was on account of the personality that he introduced into his reform work. Men as a rule fall in love with causes, when they are led to esteem the advocates of those causes. The reformer is the inspiration of the reform. What moves the world is not men alone, not ideas alone, but men and ideas in vital and vigorous union. I will now show the kind of personality Karsondas had. His appearance, manner, his habits and dress were the show windows which advertised what Karsondas had inside. His personal cleanliness and neatness in dress gave the testimony of his ability and trustworthiness. His pure clean body clothed with simple, clean dress was the symbol of his pure soul. He was a walking advertisement of himself. He illustrated in himself Mr. H. W. Shaw's theory: "As a general thing, who is neat in person, is neat in his morals." Just as Karsondas was clean and neat from outside, so was he pure inside. The way to take part in the redemption of society is that a man should purify himself. Karsondas purified himself; made himself morally as complete as possible, so that the influence which he exerted upon his countrymen may be of a noble, elevating, uplifting kind. Moral excellence is an indispensable element in all true nobleness. His soul was pure in its intention, lofty in its endeavour, refined in all its instincts, and every one of its activities was

directed by love and consummated by sacrifice. He had heart-purity. He was not sannyasi-clad, but sannyasi-hearted. His heart was the quarry out of which came out all that he built into his life. He loved truly and therefore he served. Love was the fragrance of the flowers of his heart. He lived a life of true love towards all men. Serving went with loving. The law of love was service. One cannot love truly and not serve. Only work done in love, lives. Love without serving was but an empty sentiment, a poor mockery. Love was his life. Love multiplied his power. He let part of his own life flow out with every deed of kindness that he did. He never gave less than his best, and his best way was always himself. To every life that touched him he had some errand. Everyone who met him casually became the better for it. Every life within the range of his influence received some good from him. In order that his life may be worthy of God and a blessing to the world, he saw that nothing that he did influenced others in the slightest degree to evil. His personal influence was something that always poured out from his life, like light from a lamp, like heat from a flame, like perfume from a flower. He had as the basis of his character great eternal principles. Truth, Purity and Love-these were the inalienable principles which he built into the foundation of the temple of his character. He who served by being gave most real service. Being was the means of doing, and it was they who were best, who did best. We reform others by reforming ourselves. There was an inexpressible personal atmosphere which surrounded him, "an invisible belt of magnetism" which he bore with him wherever he went. He threw the search-light of his superb personality, wherever he went through life, and left a

trail of sunshine and blessing behind him. He was loved because he scattered flowers of good cheer wherever he moved. A man can reform the world only through himself.

The above sketch of Karsondas's personality ought to satisfy the keenest student of human lives that he had reformed himself before he aspired to reform the society in which he was born. In each and every reform work that Karsondas carried out in his short earthly sojourn, it was his persuasive personality that played its part. It was because of this that he was able to gather round him at least "a few sincere friends who have known my difficulties and given me every possible help to keep me on the right path." It was because of the stuff of martyrs that he was made, it was because of the fact that he was convinced of the justness of the cause that he advocated, it was because of the great sympathy and encouragement that he received not only from the few individuals of his community but from elect souls of other communities like the late Governor of Bombay, Sir Bartle Frere, Dr. John Wilson, Sheth Sorabji Shapoorji Bengali, Mr. K. N. Kabraji and others that the fires of life that he came across in his career were not counted by him as "messages of vengeance and thunderbolts of a vindictive God" but were reckoned by him as "the cleansing of the gold in chain."

Karsondas had the utmost faith in his mission; he had burning faith in God who had entrusted him with the same; and this kept up his spirit throughout his life, though occasionally he did give vent to his pent-up feelings like an ordinary mortal that he was. "Out of sufferings have emerged the greatest souls; the most massive characters are seamed with scars;

martyrs have put on their coronation robes glittering with fire, and through the tears have the sorrowful great seen the gates of heaven." Throughout his life, Karsondas respected his work so highly and did it so reverently that he cared little what the world thought of it, and it was for this spirit of his that his centenary was celebrated for honouring him—one who had sacrificed his life at the altar of his dear motherland. His whole life had left the fibre of it interwoven in the work of his community. Purity is the sum of all loveliness as whiteness is the sum of all colours. Purity was the keynote of Karsondas's life and hence we could safely say that he was Purity personified. We have till now the habit of celebrating the anniversaries and centenaries of men who were intellectually great but this time it was in the fitness of things that we have taken it upon ourselves the celebration of the centenary of a righteous man.

It was because of Karsondas's righteousness that he left behind him a small fortune. Karsondas has said about himself some-where: "Misery and happiness is simply a mental state. One does not always derive happiness from wealth and one is not always miserable by being in a poor condition." Karsondas utilized his talents to the best of his power, his Maker did not expect more of him. "Pleasure is a snowflake, happiness a flower, but joy is a diamond." Karsondas reaped a rich reward of all his labours because, he had deep, abiding joy, and this joy was the perennial fountain, a well of water within his soul with which outward accidents could not interfere. In all his unselfish work for the world in which he lived, he had generosity in the design, humanity in the execution, and moderation with success of his undertakings. In discharging his



duty he remained true to himself, simple, honest, and unpretending. His worldly work was a great profession of his faith. His work told what he believed. He had no more religion than he acted out in his life. "Lamps do not talk ; but they do shine. A light-house sounds no drum, it beats no gong ; and yet far over the waters its friendly spark is seen by the mariner." Karsondas's religion shone out through his actions. Without a religious foundation, there can be no true, unsimulated morality, as without a root there can be no true plant. Religion was man's conception of his relation to the infinite universe and to its source ; and morality was the ever present guide of life proceeding from this relation. Karsondas had, before his eyes, a high ideal for his country, he longed it to be the best, the most cultured and the most prosperous, its people educated, far-seeing, and humane. He was both a man of ideas and a man of action, having a high-minded character, a well-balanced judgment and a disinterested motive. He rowed against the stream and therefore we could not reasonably hope to see rapid progress of all he undertook. He was a stalwart and immoveable champion of freedom from unreasoning obedience to illiterate and immoral spiritual guides, and from superstitious customs. He was untiring in his assault by tongue and pen, and was constantly debating the leading themes of welfare for his motherland. The tribute Indians have paid to Karsondas was not so much of recounting the great achievements for which he was responsible as that of emulating the spirit that he embodied. He did God's work faithfully each day and made his life a song.

"The dark power of winter seems as drearily mighty in December as in January. And even the February air

has in it the chill and sting that tell of winter near and summer far away. But the mighty tropical sunbeams are at their work; and some soft morning the first bud is out, and before we know it, spring tosses the fields full of blossoms, and the birds sing as though they had always been making the trees tremble with their joy. Like this yearly and secular change of the earth are the steps of social advance. Social evils stand and frown; they fill the air with chill and death; they seem as permanent as man himself. But the slow processes of good increase, and at last culminate in some mighty crisis of change; and the world is ever after brighter and nobler, a better place to live in. Little improvement may be seen from one year to another. But a wider and longer sweep of vision that takes in a course of ages, shows wonderful advance." The grand outcome may not be in our day, but we may at least contribute to it; and so the civilisation of the future, the happy ages of prosperous men and women may be, in part, our work.

Karsondas gathered in this world treasures that he carried with him through death's gates into the other world. The only thing that walked back from the burning ground with the mourners and refused to be burnt was the dead man's character. It lived in the community in which he was born, in which he lived, worked and died. What he was survived him. Karsondas sincerely loved his country and its people and has left behind him the fragrance of his good name for the benefit of posterity. Karsondas would never be dead to us till we have forgotten him. Karsondas was dead; yet it was not so. Death means the body without the spirit. It is only the body that dies; it is the body without the spirit that is dead. Death applies not

to the spirit, and the spirit is the man. Death is a new birth of life, not a cessation of life. It is a beginning, and not an ending. It was simply a process of going on. The celebrated Victor Hugo, when old age was upon him, wrote: "When I go down to the grave, I can say, like so many others, 'I have finished my days work'; but I cannot say I have finished my life.' My day's work will begin again the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare, it closes with the twilight to open with the dawn."

Karsondas's fertile mind had many noble plans for fulfilment for the good of his country. During his last serious illness, he had every hope of recovery, but Providence had willed otherwise. The deep dissatisfaction of Karsondas's earthly life, its unattained ideals, its dreams unfulfilled, its high purposes baffled and disappointed were a promise and a prophecy of his future destiny. God does not mock the ardent hopes and high expectations of 'them that loved Him.'

They serve God well

Who serve His creatures; when the funeral bell  
Tolls for the dead there's nothing left of all  
That decks the scutcheon and the velvet pall,  
Save this—the coronet is empty show,  
The strength and loveliness are hid below,  
The shifting wealth to others hath accrued,  
And learning cheers not the grave's solitude.  
What's done is what remains. Ah! blessed  
They who leave completed tasks of love to stay  
And answer mutely for them; being dead,  
Life was not purposeless, though life be fled.

—Lady of La Garaye.

**CHAPTER IV.**  
**THE JOURNALIST, THE SPEAKER AND**  
**THE AUTHOR.**

Mightiest of mighty means,  
 On which the arm of progress leans,  
 Man's noblest mission to advance,  
 His woes assuage, his weal enhance,  
 His rights enforce, his wrongs redress,—  
 Mightiest of mighty is the press.

\* \* \* \*

“The newspaper is the chronicle of civilisation, the common reservoir into which every stream pours its living waters, and at which every man may come and drink. It is the newspaper which gives to liberty practical life, its perpetual vigilance, its unrelaxing activity. The newspaper is a daily and sleepless watchman that reports to you every danger which menaces the institutions of your country, and its interests at home and abroad. The newspaper informs legislation of the public opinion, and it informs people of the acts of legislation; thus keeping up that constant sympathy, that good understanding between people and legislators, which conduces to the maintenance of order and prevents the stern necessity for revolution. The newspaper is a law book for the indolent, a sermon for the thoughtless, a library for the poor.

SIR E. B. LYTTON.

“If those to whom the Power of the Pen is given, wish to claim and use their highest privileges, they will work always for the public, and try to win their laurels from the public alone. Not by the voice of any “clique,” “club,” or “set” will Time accept the final verdict of an author's greatness, but by love and honour of an entire people.

Because, whatever passing surface fancies may for a while affect the public humour, the central soul of a nation always strives for Right, for Justice, and for final Good, and the author whose Power of the Pen helps strongly, boldly, and faithfully on towards these great ends, is not, and shall not, be easily forgotten."

MARIE CORELLI.

Mr. Hormasji Dadabhai, a prominent Parsi citizen during Karsondas's time, writing about the need of India of his generation said: "What India wants at present is a race of earnest thinkers and writers, who can defy alike the frowns of the vulgar and the seductions of the great. That race is fast rising. Mr. Karsondas is a fair specimen of that class." Karsondas spoke out loud and clear; he expressed what he honestly thought was true. He helped other people to think, because he formulated what others were thinking. No person wrote or thought alone—thought was in the air, but its expression was necessary to create a tangible Spirit of the Times (Zeitgeist). The value of Karsondas—the thinker who wrote or the writer who thought—was that he supplied and confirmed, all who were on his wire in their opinions, often before unuttered. The "Zeitgeist" of his times was sensitive, restless, alert, impressionable, progressive. The effect of Western civilisation had enlightened the minds of a hundred or two young men of the times who had received English education both at schools and colleges. Their minds bristled with new ideas and ideals and they eagerly aspired to improve the state of their society. They founded institutions; they debated on the burning social topics of the day. They dreamt visions of a newer and better society and were allowed to throw their visions on the screen, and under the civilised Government under

which they were living, they were not prevented from cherishing those dreams but were allowed even the liberty to express their dreams. Karsondas was one of this chosen band of enlightened youths of Bombay.

Before the days of British rule, no newspaper, as such, seemed to have existed. It thus appeared that at that time in India, there was no organized public opinion and no popular organ for the discussion of public affairs. Knowing that in public life, public opinion always ruled, this was a serious drawback, both in the interests of the people and their rulers. The British public life inspired some Englishmen; and at Calcutta, Bombay and other important cities of India, English newspapers were published; but there were only a few vernacular newspapers. The first newspaper ever printed in an Indian vernacular was issued in Bengali by Christian missionaries at Serampore, on 31st May, 1818. The Governor-General of the time, Marquis of Hastings, encouraged it by allowing it to be circulated at one-fourth the ordinary rate of postage. At this time, the press was not free. There were restrictions. It was not until 1835 that the press was granted entire liberty. In that year, the power of deporting offending journalists was taken away from the Government of India by Sir Charles Metcalf, Governor-General, who believed in absolute freedom, in consequence mainly of Lord Macaulay's strenuous pleading for abolition of restrictions. In India, Indians followed the example of Englishmen and published in English some newspapers. But people had hardly any idea about the great importance of newspapers. Few people bought newspapers and read them. There were a few vernacular newspapers also; but the editors of these papers were not cultured gentlemen and were hardly fitted to lead public

opinion. Their object was not philanthropic. They started their papers with a view to earn money by any means. In this sorry state of affairs, a few Parsi philanthropists of the time, holding reformed views, conceived the idea of publishing every Sunday, a cheap, weekly newspaper called "The Rast-Goftar" or The "Truth Speaker." They founded the paper with the noble object of spreading enlightened views among Indians on different subjects, for the welfare of people of all communities. The arrangement was that contributors to the paper were not to be paid anything, and the loss to be incurred had to be borne by some rich people of the Parsi community. This paper devoted some space for the ventilation of evils in Hindu society. Karsondas was one of the chief writers on Hindu Social Reforms in that paper. He was, from his young age, a man of studious habits and with keen powers of observation. His penetrating vision had noticed many defects in the people of his community. He was a man of lofty ideas and loftier ideals. He found that the space allotted to the subjects of Hindu social reforms was not sufficient and that the subscribers of the paper being mostly Parsis, what little he was able to write therein, was not likely to reach a large number of Hindu readers. Daily he was noticing the good opinion the "Rast Goftar" was creating in the world of Parsis. He saw that his people were foolish, ignorant and superstitious and had no taste for reading any newspapers, and there was the great necessity of tackling this poor material, if any good effect had to be produced. He knew that Hindus who were superstitious had a reverential regard for every thing printed and their minds being not cultured, were like blank white sheets, ready for receiving the first impressions and were likely to be influenced for

good, if a special paper was published solely for their benefit. His experience of the "Rast Goftar" convinced him about the mighty effect of the agency of the free press by its didactic teaching for the real education of people and he therefore resolved to venture on his new project. But he was a young man of no means. He had brains but no wherewithal to launch this new scheme. He placed his whole plan before his respected friend, Sheth Mangaldas Nathooobhoy; and the latter most generously agreed to take upon himself the financial responsibility for his new paper for some time. Karsondas, therefore, in the year 1885, started a cheap, Gujarati pioneer weekly newspaper called "Satya Prakash" or "The Light of Truth". He did the work of managing and editing the paper without any remuneration; even the contributors were not paid anything. This paper with its characteristic name was started with the good objects of destroying evil customs, of removing the triple curse of ignorance, folly and superstition, and of improving the happiness of people here and hereafter. Karsondas earned his honest livelihood by other independent means. The paper was started at a most opportune moment because at the very time it was founded, there was raging a bitter controversy between Brahmins and the Maharajas; and the new cheap weekly paper was most welcome to the people. Its circulation went up beyond the expectations of the founder. From his young age, Karsondas's discerning eye had suspected something wrong with the conduct of the Maharajas and now he was convinced that what he was suspecting was absolutely true. He therefore fully utilized the "Chhapan Bhog" controversy by writing slashing articles on the conduct of the Maharajas



These attacks, coming from a votary of the sect of Vallabhacharya, were very keenly felt and there was a great commotion in the world of Vaishnavas; but Karsondas, a man of principle, had the full trust of his reformer friends, and therefore, in this bitter controversy he justified the name of the paper and also justified by his own conduct that the paper was solely started for the good of his people. Rupees ten thousand were offered him to be silent; threats were used to keep him quiet, but nothing availed. The intrepid Karsondas budged not an inch. The temptation for poor Karsondas was too strong but he withstood it manfully. At this time, another happy event for the paper happened. A paper called "Chabook" or the "Whip," which under its able editor was doing useful work of advocating reforms in the Parsi community by writing freely and fearlessly, fell a victim to the snares of temptations, falsified its good name and took up the unjust cause of the Maharajas. In one of its issues, the Editor personally abused Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji, with the result that Sheth Lakhmidas filed against the Editor a suit for damages. The Maharajas were subpoenaed as Defendant's witnesses. This step terrified them. They avoided the serving of the summonses, by closing their temples for a week. The world of blind Vaishnavas came in a fix, and the Maharajas taking mean advantage of the position of their sincere votaries, exerted over them undue pressure through their female votaries and got signatures of a large number of their votaries on a document which Karsondas in the issue of "Satya Prakash" of 16th January 1859 rightly styled as a "Slavery Bond". By this document, the signatories agreed to open a Fund for making all proper arrangements for the

purpose of presenting a petition to Government to pass suitable legislation so that the Maharajas may not have to attend in Courts, and that no Vaishnava should henceforth have any summons issued against Maharajas and if any person of any other community, not being a Vaishnava, were to do so, the case should be settled, and further agreed that no Vaishnava should print or cause to be printed any defamatory matter against Maharajas and that if any body acted contrary to this, he should be severely punished by his caste. The last clause of this Bond was specially meant for application against Karsondas. This Bond created a crucial moment in Karsondas's life. He was surrounded on all sides by timid reformers, none of whom was prepared to undergo the terrible punishment of excommunication from his caste. The odds against Karsondas were terribly heavy. A period of momentous choice came before him. A young man of ordinary mettle would have been cowed down; but Karsondas calmly and deliberately weighed the pros and cons of the whole situation, and keeping ever in view his lofty ideal of sacrifice and service for the people decided in favour of Truth and Justice, come what might. All the Vaishnavas were eagerly awaiting to see what attitude he took in the 'Satya Prakash'. They all thought that Karsondas would not be able to stand this fiery ordeal, but they had no idea of the stern spirit of Karsondas. The next issue of the 'Satya Prakash' vehemently exposed the hollowness of each and every article of the Bond. In this very ably written article Karsondas advised the Maharajas as follows :—

" Do not waste the large sum of Rs. 60,000. Sending a barrister for the purpose aimed at would not be

realized. Utilise the amount as a gift to the Victoria Museum. The better, more respectable and proper method of remaining aloof from the Courts of law was not to interfere in others' suits, not to have anything to do with the affairs of others but to act virtuously and to discharge the duties of their office of spiritual guides so that all their votaries and friends may love them. Maharajas should not do banking business and should keep themselves free from worldly matters. They should not have cupidity of possessidg others' property, and should not act in such a manner as would compel their attendance in Courts. It is sheer tyranny to take part in worldly matters relating to monetary and property matters and to command their votaries not to call their Gurus in Courts. Further, it is monstrous that the Maharajas themselves should do evil deeds and yet Vaishnavas should not complain against the Maharajas in the Press. Even the British Government has not dared to act in this manner. The true editors will never remain quiet when they see unrighteous actions done by people; they will fearlessly give publicity to them and offer their severe comments on the same. In our paper 'Satya Prakash,' rest assured, neither Maharajas nor anybody will be falsely attacked, and threats of caste punishment or threats of any kind whatsoever can not stifle its voice of Truth. The Maharajas and their blind votaries have bungled in attempting to stifle the voice of the Press. The clause to settle suits amicably in which the Maharajas are either Plaintiffs or Defendants is ridiculous on the face of it. A Hindu or a Vaishnava, being afraid of caste punishment may do so, but it is extremely difficult to have such kind of settlement with parties of other communities. Maharaja's votaries shall

have to spend enormously and they would be ruined. How is it possible for them to give to parties any amount demanded by them?"

Karsondas, pointing out how harmful were the clauses of the Bond reprimanded Maharajas and tendered them proper advice. In this article he congratulated the rich signatories who had declined to have a clause inserted in the Bond which prohibited the Vaishnavas from subscribing or reading a paper in which there was criticism against Maharajas. He expressed his regret at the Sheths who held enlightened views on reforms slavishly signing the unreasonable clauses of the Bond, and prayed God that they might be blessed to break their own fetters, and they, looking to their own reputation and the low state of the people, may devote their energies for the good of the people and gladly asserted that the prophecy that the torrential flow of reform from England will not be impeded in its progress has proved true.

In this way, Karsondas proved to be a stalwart champion of the liberty of free speech. He justified his reputation as a true journalist. The Kapole caste people and other Vaishnavas were terribly afraid. Karsondas was not excommunicated and thereby the other clauses of the Bond proved ineffective, and remained as a dead letter. This article of Karsondas showed his good abilities as a fearless, independent thinker and writer.

In the middle of the year 1860, Maharaj Jadunathji Brijratnji came to Bombay from Surat. He had founded a girls' school at Surat, and doing so was considered to be very meritorious, during Karsondas's time, because female illiteracy of the period was abysmal.

Karsondas, therefore, like a true journalist, wrote a leading article in his paper and extolled the conduct of Jadunathji. This Maharaja was debaucherous and had come to Bombay for some purpose. Karsondas's friend Kavi Narmadashanker invited this Maharaja to have a public discussion on the subject: "Whether Hindu Shastras permitted widow re-marriages or not?" The Maharaja agreed. In the discussion, the main object was lost and the controversy turned round the question whether Hindu Shastras were believed by reformers to be revealed or not. Narmadashanker failed to notice the object of the Maharaja in putting this question to him, and therefore replied that all Shastras were not revealed. Thereupon the meeting was dissolved and the general talk of the town was that the reformers were atheists and that they had no belief in Hindu Shastras. Jadunathji Maharaj thought that the matter had ended there; but Karsondas was not the man to allow him to score so easy a victory over the reformers in this way. He answered Jadunathji's questions ably in the 'Satya Prakash' and asked the Maharaja new questions. The Maharaja also published a separate organ of his own called "Svadharm Vardhak and Sanshaya Chedak". In this Jadunathji replied to the reformers' queries. In this way, the controversy raged for some time on the original subject, but ultimately it turned on the ancient Hindu religion and its new sects. Both sides supported their respective claims. In the 'Satya Prakash,' the reformers took up a bold stand by saying that the new sects founded in 'Kali yug' were bogus; their Scriptures were false and the heads of such sects were charlatans. They also pointed out that the sects whose tenets were immoral, and the conduct of whose

spiritual guides was licentious could not be true at all. The Maharajas got their living by the tenets of their sect and it was their interest to believe in them themselves and to make their votaries put implicit faith in them; and it was sheer self-interest of theirs that prompted them to defend the same. Maharaja Jadunathja and Karsondas fought out their duel in their respective papers. This wordy warfare took a serious turn. On 16th September 1860, Jadunathji in the paper called "Chabook" and on 29th September in the "Svadharna Vardhak" vehemently attacked the reformers and publicly challenged Karsondas to a controversy on the subject of religion. In the above-named periodical of the Maharaja, a lecture of Jadunathji was published and in that a distinct allusion was made to the Editor of the 'Satya Prakash' as follows: Whoever may wish to write upon this lecture should do so by quoting the Shastras, but he who would not do so, should be unworthy of belief by his own people." Karsondas accepted this challenge, and from a consciousness of his responsibilities, reviewed in the 'Satya Prakash' of 21st October 1860, the lecture in question. Upon this, Jadunathji resorted to aggressive measures, prohibited the Vaishnavas from subscribing to 'Satya Prakash,' and gave expression to his cordial wish that Karsondas should be punished by excommunication from his caste for writing those reviews of the lecture.

The whole article of 21st October 1860, alluded to above is given in Chapter Second. Karsondas wrote also another article in vindication of himself, and in reply to the charges levelled against him by Jadunathji. This controversy continued for some time. Amongst others, Jadunathji published articles in which he accused Karsondas of falsely interpreting the

doctrines of the Maharajas, and applied to him the following words: "What hypocrisy! Oh, you Vaishnavas, you see whose is the rascality, and whose the hypocrisy!" It was for Karsondas's article of 21st October, 1860, that Jadunathji Maharaj filed a Libel Suit on 14th May, 1861, full six months after the publication of the article, in the Supreme Court, claiming damages of Rs. 50,000 against Karsondas. In August, Karsondas put in his defence of justification. I do not wish to reiterate what has been said already in previous chapters. Suffice it to say that Karsondas was successful in proving his plea of justification. As we are concerned here only with Karsondas's career as an honest journalist, it would serve our purpose to repeat only two passages from Justice Joseph Arnould's judgment to show in what light he viewed Karsondas as a journalist:—

"As a Vallabhacharyan addressing his co-sectaries, as a Bania addressing his caste fellows—above all as a journalist addressing his readers composed principally of followers of the Maharajas, had he no interest, had he no duty in denouncing the mal-practices which it is the principal object of this alleged libel to expose? It appears to me that he had both an interest and a duty.

A public journalist is a public teacher; the true function of the press, that by virtue of which it has rightly grown to be one of the great powers of the modern world, is the function of teaching, elevating and enlightening those who fall within the range of its influence.

To expose and denounce evil and barbarous practices to attack usages and customs inconsistent with moral purity and social progress, is one of its highest, its most imperative duties. When those evils and errors are con-

separated by time, fenced round by custom, countenanced and supported by the highest and most influential class in society, when they are wholly beyond the control and supervision of any other tribunal, then it is the function and the duty of the press to intervene; honestly endeavouring by all the powers of argument, denunciation and ridicule, to change and purify the public opinion which is the real basis on which these evils are built and the real power by which they are perpetuated.

As editor of the *Satya Prakash*, the defendant was, in my opinion, acting within the clear limits of his duty (as defined in the case of *Harrison vs. Bush*) in denouncing to a public principally composed of Bhattias and Banias, the moral delinquencies of the Maharajas."

I deem it proper at this juncture, to quote two opinions as to how the press viewed Karsondas's career as a journalist:—

**The Bombay Gazette's view:—**"In the exposure that has been made, every intelligent person must be struck with the temperate, judicious, and conscientious tone and character of it. The only wonder is that Karsondas, with so much knowledge of the evil practices of the Maharaj, and so much knowledge of the injury to public morals from those practices, could have exercised such moderation and self-denial in exposing them. The efforts he first made to persuade the Maharajas personally to renounce those practices of which it is a shame even to speak, evinced a becoming tenderness and desire to avoid exposure; the efforts he then made to move the sect to exert its united authority or influence for the same purpose evinced a real sincerity, an honesty of intention,



and a freedom from selfish motives; the efforts which he finally made, after all others had failed, to try the virtue of a public appeal to the Maharajas through the press, which he knew, would put enmity between his caste and himself, and raise up a storm of foul-mouthed reproach against him, evinced a firmness, self-denial, and determination to effect the necessary reform, which are admirable in themselves, and which would have had the desired effect upon any but those sunk in the sottishness of lust. Karsondas has done his duty."

View of the **'Bombay Saturday Review'**: —

"The Courts of law were not open to him, for the Maharajas, however vicious they might be, had been guilty of no crime in committing adultery with women whose husbands and fathers presented them for that purpose to priests whom they believed to be incarnations of Deity.....To whom could he turn, or in what way could he satisfy his righteous indignation and do his duty as a teacher of the people, except by appealing at the bar of public opinion? But, even although this was the only resource left him, the defendant contented himself with attacking the Maharajas generally and the doctrines of the Vallabhachraya religion; and it was not till Jadunathji Maharaj himself offered provocation by starting a journal of his own in which he constituted himself the champion of the faith, that the editor of the 'Satya Prakash' at last singled out this Maharaj by name, and charged him personally with practising the very vices he affected to deplore in others. The 'Satya Prakash' had its independent existence only for five years, viz., from 1855 to 1860. During these five years, when Karsondas was unable to edit it, he left its

editorship for ten months in the able hands of his friends, Mahipatram Rupram and Zaverilal Umiashanker, and for nine months in the year 1858, in the hands of his literary friend, Tribhowanadas Dwarkadas. Barring this period, in nearly two hundred issues of the paper Karsondas wrote articles ably and honestly. Unlike Jadunathji's paper the 'Propagator' which had only 225 subscribers, the 'Satya Prakash' had five hundred. The starting of the 'Satya Prakash' was among the Gujaratis, a pioneer paper and the way in which it upheld its noble title speaks highly in favour of the ability and integrity of Karsondas."

After the Libel Case was over the 'Times of India' gave the following certificate to the paper and its editor:—

"The Satya Prakash has in reality verified its name. Through a long night of superstition and darkness, vile creatures like this Maharaj have been able to make their dens of vice and debauchery seem to their spell-bound followers to be the holy temple of God. We have no doubt that the greatest of all public services has been performed by the excellent and intelligent Karsondas Mulji for his countrymen, a service that must for ever bear fruit."

Karsondas continued to work as a journalist throughout his life. In his 'Satya Prakash,' he exposed the social and religious abuses of his people without any fear. He used all the legitimate means such as ridicule, humour, hatred, understanding, etc., to improve his people. Once when he could not influence the ladies of his caste to stop the filthy practice of singing indecent songs at the time of marriages, he like a bold

and true journalist, dared to publish in his paper, the names of the Kapole ladies who were guilty of this practice. This made a sensation in the community, and there was current talk of the excommunication of Karsondas. Nothing was done to Karsondas. His persistent campaign did bear fruit. Throughout his life, Karsondas found time enough to write to different periodicals. Even while he had to discharge the onerous duties as an administrator, he did not give up this literary labour of love because he considered Press to be the mightiest agency of his times for influencing public opinion. He believed in Dr. Johnson's view that "nothing adds so much to the glory of a country as a free and independent press." Karsondas acted as the editor of the 'Rast Goftar' for nine months, in 1858, and for two years and a half from 1861 to 1863. He wrote in 150 issues of the paper—a paper which had 1200 subscribers. In 1860, the 'Satya Prakash' was amalgamated with the 'Rast Goftar'; and Karsondas continued sending his contributions to it from time to time. Further he acted as an editor of a Gujarati magazine called "Stri Bodh" or "Advice to Women" from April 1859 to May 1861. Karsondas wrote in 22 numbers of this magazine. Its circulation was among a thousand subscribers. Karsondas was also publishing for some time a paper called "Bombay Bazaar," at the time of the outgoing of the China Mail. Karsondas was an able journalist, and under his able editorship, the 'Satya Prakash' was recognised a first-class weekly. The success which Karsondas attained as an author and a journalist was because he conducted his work on certain important principles. I will now mention a few secrets of his journalistic success:

1. Karsondas had deeply thought over the serious problems of his society and he knew the right remedies

for its social evils. He knew that Providence had gifted him with the mission of improving his people through his tongue and pen. Unlike men who learn to write before they have anything to say, Karsondas knew what he had to say and therefore his style was peculiar to him and proved very effective.

2. Karsondas was not a stylish writer, but an effective writer, because he was in touch with life in myriad forms. Nothing that was human was alien to him, nothing was so small or unimportant in the way of actual life that it did not secure his sympathy. He was interested in all of these things.

3. He knew that by his published writings he was assuming the office of a teacher or influencer of the public mind and he could not escape influencing the moral state of his people; hence in his humble opinion, nothing was too good for the public. He was of opinion that the people desired the best they can get and no scamp work should ever be offered to them. He had the happy habit of doing the best he could and therefore as a journalist, he gave his best for the public of his own immediate hour, without any egotistical calculations as to their possible wider appreciation after death.

4. Between the two mighty propagators for moulding public opinion—the tongue and the pen—both of them being the interpreters of the mind, Karsondas chose the pen as the more faithful of the two, as it had a greater advantage of premeditation, was not subject to error, and left things behind it on authentic record.

5. Karsondas believed in the truth of what he was writing and therefore was compelled to write in a way as

to bear witness to what he had seen and felt. Call him a fanatic or an enthusiast, but his firm convictions enabled him to suffer for scorned ideals, fight for losing battles, lead forlorn hopes and to become a martyr for lost causes. His conduct, both in his words and deeds and in his writings, followed his beliefs and he became a true helper of his society through his valuable writings.

6. As a speaker and a journalist he was simple, unaffected, honest. Elegance of language was not in his power; but simplicity and straightforwardness were. He wrote much as he would speak; and spoke as he thought. He was as he said, and he said what he was. He knew the only way to shine was to be modest and unassuming.

7. Karsondas spoke and wrote for himself. He exemplified in his person Emerson's view:—

“The way to speak and write what shall not go out of fashion, is, to speak and write sincerely. The argument which has not power to reach my own practice, I may well doubt, will fail to reach yours. But take Sidney's maxim:—“Look in thy heart, and write.” He that writes to himself writes to an eternal public, That statement only is fit to be made public, which you have come at in attempting to satisfy your own curiosity.”

8. Karsondas said his message straight out, in his own simple way, without ever giving a thought to how it would be accepted. He felt right and wrote and spoke as he felt. He was never afraid of being misunderstood. He was never eager and anxious to make an impression. He appealed to sanity and he held that how far his message would be accepted was none of his business.

9. Karsondas implicitly followed the three important canons of criticism :—

**Be Fair. Be Free. Be Fearless.**

What nobility and fair-mindedness Karsondas as a journalist had is seen in the fact that after he and Jadunathji had a tough fight in their respective papers which culminated in the famous article in the "Satya-Prakash" of 21st October, 1860, Karsondas wrote in his paper on 18th November 1860 the following summary of Jadunathji's public career and a frank statement of his pure motives :

"We have thus made a note of the career of Jadunathji Maharaj during his short stay in Bombay. In concluding this note we beg permission to give our impartial opinion about Shri Jadunathji Maharaj. The praises of this Maharaj formerly published in the "Satya Prakash" paper are not lessened by the subsequent controversy. Of all the Maharajas who are known to us, Shri Jadunathji Maharaj has been found to be the most courageous and the most discriminating. Without regard to the unjust means the said Maharaj has latterly adopted to injure us, we must say that by a public approval of female education the Maharaj has rendered himself worthy of no little respect. Had not the post Narmadashankar erred, and had he not plunged him into the re-marriage controversy, we should this day have seen the Maharaj advancing instead of retiring from the field of reform. But often times slight incidents prove unfavourable. The same is the case now, and we are really sorry for it.....O religious preceptors! You are not our enemies. You have not in any way injured us. We entertain no malice against you. We wish that you may receive all

due respect as religious preceptors. And we have not had any business or dealings with you; then, O religious preceptors, why should we entertain any malice against you and annoy you without cause? If, in telling you the truth, any hard words have ever been used, do you forgive us. Remember that those who become flatterers and do not endeavour to lead you from a crooked path are your enemies in the shape of friends. And those are your true friends who warn you that if you do not leave the crooked path your persuasion and dignity will be prejudiced. We heartily wish that you would quit the evil path and come up on the good path that we may never be under the necessity of writing anything acrimonious."

Again Karsondas gave the following evidence in the Bhattia Conspiracy Case. I give below the relevant portion here to show that Karsondas used his discretion well as a journalist:

"The alleged libel I did not consider filth. I did not consider it filth to let it be known that the Maharajas had connection with our wives and daughters. I consider that publication would conduce to public morality. I presented the facts of those practices of the Maharaja in the least filthy manner possible consistent with my duty as a journalist."

It is sufficient to mention that the "Satya Prakash" won golden opinions from all communities. At one time some unknown Parsis sent a contribution of Rs. 200 for the services the paper was rendering to the cause of morality. I now conclude this part by quoting here the necessary portions of an Address presented to Karsondas on 12th March 1863, on the eve of his departure for

England by his brother journalists to show that during Karsondas's life-time his services in his capacity as a journalist were sufficiently appreciated :—

You have for a number of years lived with honour and respect in the company of Indian Editors and Journalists of this city and you are now about to part from this circle and leaving India by the next English mail for the purpose of visiting Europe, and therefore we, the undersigned, your brother-journalists, take this opportunity of expressing publicly our feelings of respect towards you and our feelings of pain at parting from you.

Indian newspapers and periodicals have as their aim the reformation and welfare of our country. The aim and object of Indian journalists is to create in Indian population a taste for reading and to improve their state politically, socially and morally by pointing out their defects in these different fields, by effecting improvements in the vernacular language and in the instruments of giving knowledge in that language. Having always kept in view this aim and object, you have discharged your duty and have given more than one instance as a proof of the same, during all the time that that you have remained in our midst.

Among these instances is the most fresh and noble instance of the celebrated Maharaj Libel Case. During this trial, you have men and always kept in mind the rights of your fellow-country-men and women and remaining unafraid of the wrath of an infuriated ignorant mob, you have as a journalist and as a righteous man shown public spirit and impartiality and have been put to much trouble by passing through most anxious time, and for this, we, your fellow-editors, assembled here, take this opportunity of offering you our



warm congratulations. Having prosecuted that case, you have succeeded; but truly speaking, this is not your personal success but the success of Truth and Reform because thousands of people who were suffering from untold troubles and insults owing to their folly and superstition under the tyrannical body of a handful of religious priests have been freed and we are sure that as time passes, people will more and more appreciate the good effect of this case. You have rendered yeoman's services to Vaishnavites by conducting the case and for this you are justly entitled to this special honour.

Indian writers have commenced to succeed in the object mentioned above, and thereby, the reputation of Vernacular papers has increased. Their status, position and dignity have to some extent improved than what it was formerly. Their circulation has also increased. It is a matter of rejoicing on our part to see this happy result, and in obtaining this good result, we give you due honour for your share in the same. At the same time, we all unanimously wish that it may become possible for you all to keep up this agitation.

You have resolved to go on a long voyage to England. This too is an instance of your public spirit and your disposition to be a pioneer in effecting good reforms; because it is true that among the Baniyas you are the first to go to England. We wish you bon voyage and we pray the Almighty that He may grant you the realization of your object and you may soon return to meet your friends again safely and with full health and vigour.

#### KARSONDAS AS A SPEAKER,

The principles which Karsondas cherished as a journalist stood good so far as his career as a public speaker was concerned.

Karsondas was not an orator as such, but was accustomed to speak with effect in public meetings. His style of addressing and the manner of his treating the subject were such as to command the confidence of his audience. In all, Karsondas delivered 31 well-thought-out lectures on educational, social, and political topics before large audiences in England and at several places in India like Deesa, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Verawal and Limree. Karsondas as a writer was more famous than as a speaker.

#### KAKSONDAS AS AN AUTHOR.

James Allen says :—

"Wouldst thou write a living book, thou must first *live*; Thou shalt draw around thee the mystic garment of a manifold experience, and shalt learn, in enjoyment and suffering, gladness and sorrow, conquest and defeat, that which no book and no teacher can teach thee. Thou shalt learn of life, of thy soul; thou shalt tread the Lonely Road, and shalt become; thou shalt be. Thou shalt then write thy book, and it shall live; it shall be more than a book. Let thy book first live in thee, then shalt thou live in thy book."

Karsondas lived the sentiments that he preached in his books. Hence all his books were instructive, innocent, full of good advice and entertaining. They are quite fit for reading in families, and worthy of being presented as prize books to boys and girls. His book on 'Travels in England' was the first best Gujerati book of its kind. His three books "Sansara-Sukh," "Kutumb Mitra" and "Nibandha Mala (Part First)" contain exact description of much of our social and religious life and Karsondas's opinion thereon; and further are mirrors-

so to speak, for showing to the people of the later generations the state of society during Karsondas's time. Karsondas's mission was to do the greatest good through his pen. He was not a brilliant author but he was an effective author. His reputation as an author was well-established. His best work—full of substance and thought—consisted of translations from the English. His good work was of the kind of newspaper-writings, useful for ameliorating the social condition of the people of his time. In his newspaper writings he always wrote seriously and sensibly and therefore one can safely say that all his published works were well-written and were quite good for the purpose intended. During Karsondas's time, the Gujarati language was not cultivated at all and therefore one has to judge Karsondas's writings from the standard of his times. Here it must be mentioned that as time went, Karsondas considerably improved his language.

Karsondas's biographer, Mahipatram, gave his verdict about Karsondas as an author in the following words:—  
 "Mr. Karsondas was a successful author of Gujarati books. His works give an insight into the state of the society in which he lived. The manners and customs of the Gujarati Hindus and of the Vantias of Bombay in particular are described in them in an entertaining manner. His books are all moral. His language at first was the corrupt Gujarati spoken and written in Bombay, but subsequently it was corrected by him. His style is easy and flowing. He studiously avoided florid love stories, immodest ideas, and indecent expressions. We recommend living Gujarati authors to imitate his good example."

Karsondas was quite conscious of his powers as a writer. Writing from Rajkot on 11th November, 1867, to his esteemed literary friend, Mansukhrambhai, he said:—

“.....I am pleased to see your great industry in writing and publishing books and in keeping yourself busy in doing good to your countrymen.....My writings cannot be of as high a type as yours, but it is a matter of satisfaction to me that I have been able to do some service to my fellow-beings according to my humble capacity.....”.

Except his book called “The Sect of the Maharajas and “The Gujerati into English Dictionary,” all of his works are in the Gujerati language. Some of his books and pamphlets were published by him. A few were published by others. Karsondas also got others’ work published. Among his works the Gujerati and English Dictionary was published in its second edition. His Gujerati “Travels in England,” “Niti Vachan” and “Sansar-Sukh” also were published in their second editions. Karsondas published a few books and pamphlets written by others also. He translated the English speech of Sir Bartle Frere on Girls’s Schools delivered in 1865 in the Gujerati language and had it published in a pamphlet form.

I shall deal now with Karsondas’s works in details.

“Niti-Vachan” or “Sentiments of Morality” a book of 212 pages, was first published by Karsondas in the year 1859. It was dedicated to Karsondas’s helper and friend Sheth Mangaldas Nathoobhoy. Its second edition was published in the year 1865 without any dedication. This book was largely a translation from English of a famous book written by a Brahmin of India. The translation of that book in English was known as

"The Economy of Human Life" and an English author called it "Gems of Thought and Treasures of Truth." It contained some original portion also. When it was first published, the types used in printing, its binding and the whole get-up were so beautiful that a friend from Ahmedabad sent a letter of congratulations to Karsondas. A Gujerati scholar said about the book: "One can safely say that in Gujerati it was the first of its kind." It was a very laudable work. Its style was easy. All subjects chosen were of an instructive kind. It was really full of advice. It treated of useful topics like advice on several social matters, how to control one's passions, advice for Divine Worship, etc. It was a useful book for all communities, for the young as well as the old. The book is not interesting, but instructive, one meant not for passing time but for serious consideration. The book would repay perusal even this day. This book showed Karsondas's powers of selecting proper material for placing before his readers, his love of beauty and his excellent powers of translation from English into Gujerati..

"Sansar-Sukh" or "Social Happiness" was published in 1860. Its second edition was also published. It was a revised and enlarged collection of articles contributed by Karsondas in the monthly periodical known as "Stri Bodh." It was full of imaginary stories with illustrations depicting the social life of the Baniyas and specially the Kapole Baniyas of Bombay. It abounded in useful suggestions for improving the social condition of Baniyas and was worth studying by all Hindus. If women paid attention to the advice given therein they would surely lead a happy life.

Karsondas's monumental work in English was that known as "The Sect of the Maharajas." It was written and published in England by Karsondas in the year 1865. It was a bulky, illustrated volume, finely bound, beautifully printed and having colored pictures. The book is now out of print. This was the only English work written by Karsondas. He wrote it at first and got it corrected afterwards by a learned English friend of his. It contained the elements of Hindu religion, a short account of the Hindu Scriptures like the Vedas, the Vedangs, Upanishads and Puranas; a description of the different sects of the Hindu religion. It treated about the origin of the Vallabhacharya Sect; a description of the founder, his sons and descendants; the thoughts and behaviour of the Maharajas; the songs sung by the female votaries of the Maharajas; the scriptures of the Sect; the evil effects produced by the Sect; the evil practices of the Maharajas and their tyranny; the troubles experienced by the Bombay Maharajas, the "Chappan Bhog" controversy and the part the Maharajas took therein, the Maharajas' objection to attend Courts of Law, the discussion on Maharajas in Indian Newspapers, the account of the Slavery Bond and a detailed account of the Maharaja Libel Case. This work was a good testimony of Karsondas's habits of industry and research. It was full of useful information. Its perusal would alone give us sufficient information so as to judge how important services Karsondas had rendered to the Hindus in the cause of pure morality. This work was reviewed by the English press and I would content myself by giving here a few specimens of their opinions. The *Spectator* (April, 8, 1865): "Its value to the student is very great"; the *Watchman* (April, 5, 1865): "Karsondas has performed

his task with honesty and ability.”; the *London Review* (April, 1, 1865): “The subject of which he treats is important since it concerns the happiness of millions”; the *Globe* (May, 20, 1865) “It contains matter well worthy the attention of Indian reformers—both theoretical and practical;” the *Morning Herald* (April, 21, 1865): “The present volume minutely describes that foul service, compared with which the abominations of Mormonism are decent.” The *Literary Gazette* (Feb. 19, 1865): “The complete history of the sect of Vallabhacharya which is unfolded here, reads like a chapter of romance with more sensation than even Miss Braddon would resort to in her wildest flights. It is the history of a class of priests claiming to be of divine origin, who have succeeded in elevating the grossest immorality to a law of heaven.”

Karsondas wrote this important work to open the eyes of the Hindus and of the whole civilised world so that a sufficiently strong public opinion may be created to enable Government to put down the immoralities of the Maharajas by means of legislation. Karsondas wrote:— “If this work should at all contribute to that good end we shall have reaped a rich reward.”

As Karsondas expressed this opinion, it is better to offer a few remarks pertaining to the subject at this juncture. Long before Karsondas, feeble attempts were made by poets and prose writers to call people’s attention to the vices of the Maharajas, but nobody paid much attention to this matter. Karsondas’s noble and bold part in the Libel Case opened the eyes of the Hindus. It was in Bombay, that the evil practices of the Maharajas had reached a climax so much so that the Maharajas themselves knew that they had gone beyond their limits.

Karsondas and his Bhattia, Deccani and Parsi friends tried their best to reform the Maharajas privately but when all efforts failed, then Karsondas and the Press had to expose them in the public. What no one in the country was able to do that Karsondas by his bold fight in the Libel Case did and thereby laid the whole of the Hindu community eternally under a deep debt of gratitude to him. No doubt the mentality of the votaries of the Maharajas has been considerably changed; the evil practices are not much in evidence but the evil is underground and not eradicated altogether. The evils of Sati existed in the country for a long time, and since the attention of Government was called to them, it took them nearly twenty-five years to accomplish the reform. Nearly sixty-three years have elapsed since Karsondas's death and none in the Legislative Assembly has seen fit to move his little finger to remove this darkest stain on the fair name of Hinduism. There is no doubt that this evil is prevalent only among the sect of Vallabhacharya consisting of about two lakhs of persons; but the very fact that such a kind of sect is in existence is a matter of shame to all Hindus. For all these years, Maharajas and their votaries have been given sufficient opportunity of rectifying their conduct; but now that it is still not improved, it behoves Hindu reformers who are members of the Assembly to move in the matter and if steps be taken in right earnest, it is certain that in the near future Government will see their way to introduce legislation for protecting credulous people from the grossest evils of their own social and religious life. The policy of non-interference with social and religious matters has been a marked characteristic of British administrators; but in a matter of this kind, when the evil effects are detrimentally and diastrously affecting thousands and thousands.



of Hindu families, the characteristic of Government should be that of an intolerance of abuses. It is the duty of Karsondas's admirers to see that they do take early steps to bring about the consummation of the wishes of the great reformer who sacrificed his all for the cause of purity in social and religious life of the Hindus. The Gujarati scholar, Navalram Luxmiram, is quite correct when in reviewing Karsondas's biography he said:—

“The history of the Vallabh sect of Karsondas's time was the history of the life of Karsondas. The highest and noblest work of Karsondas's life was to shake the Pushti Marga thoroughly saturated with unrighteousness to its very foundation, to lessen its force and to degrade it from its highest pedestal in the estimation of its votaries. The success of Karsondas's life consists in this work; it is through this work of his that the name of Karsondas became famous both in India and Europe; and it is in connection with this episode that in the history of social reform, the name of that brave soul will ever remain green in the memory of his countrymen.”

In 1866, Karsondas commenced to study Hindu religious literature. His study of English works on Hindu Scriptures induced him to write a Gujarati book. He wrote some pages and got them printed at once. Afterwards he found that the printed portion needed revision. Karsondas wanted to write a bigger work, but death deprived his people of the benefit of his views. Karsondas got the few pages he had written published in the form of a book. This book consisted of 31 pages and from it we learn that Karsondas was in favour of calling the Hindu religion by the title of “Arya Dharma” and said that the genuine kernel of the Arya Dharma was to be found in the Vedas. In this book he

dealt with the language of the Vedas, and the reasons why people were left in ignorance of the Vedas and said that whatever was written in the Puranas was not written in the Vedas. He said: "In the Vedas nothing is written about the incarnation of Vishnu, nothing is written about idol worship; yet the authority of the Vedas is recognised by all religious books. It thus clearly appears why the writers of the Puranas kept people ignorant about the Vedas." Karsondas in this brochure says that in the Vedas was to be found the nucleus of a pure religion. The language of this book was better than the language used by him in his book on 'Travels in England.' Karsondas's study of religious literature in 1866 showed that he had lost faith in the sect in which he was born and bred and that he was in search of a purer form of faith and he found that in the Vedas.

In the year 1866, a Gujerati original, bulky volume of 360 pages known as "Travels in England" was published by Karsondas. Its binding, its colored pictures, the type selected, the papers used, all were of the best type and reveal Karsondas's taste and love for the beautiful. He had ordered out colored pictures, but when he saw them, finding them not to his taste he rejected them all and ordered out an entirely new set of colored pictures. This showed that he never liked to have any slipshod work, but always aimed at thoroughness and perfection. This work revealed Karsondas's great powers of observation and the beautiful manner of describing the scenes which he had seen with his own eyes. The price of the book was Ra. 12. The first edition was exhausted soon and in the next year, the second edition was out. This book was purchased by several orthodox rich Baniyas, who spared not their energy in persecuting Karsondas. It is mentioned

by Karsondas's friend, Sjt. Mansukhrambhai, that Karsondas did not spare any pains to make this work as beautiful as possible, and that he tried his level best to write it as elegantly as possible. A Marathi translation of the book was also published. The Bombay Government gave good encouragement in the publication of this book. All the chapters of the book are entertaining and instructive; but among them the first, ninth and tenth are more important and worth studying. In the ninth and tenth chapters, Karsondas pointed out to his countrymen the great virtues of the English which made them great in all walks of life and advised his countrymen to emulate those virtues. The book was highly valued both for its contents and for its beautiful get-up and was considered by all to be worthy of a place in each and every home. The book was so well written that any reader would be induced to think of visiting England; but till the year 1877 after Karsondas, not a single Baniya went to England. Karsondas wrote the book with a view, to use his own words:—"to create not only a desire to visit the great and glorious land of commerce, beauty and benevolence, but the more important desire of raising themselves and their country to the same level." Karsondas visited England second time in 1867; but he was obliged, after a stay of a few months to return to India before winter on account of his poor health. During this visit, he had collected ample materials for writing another book of Travels in Europe, and had actually written a portion of his new work; but it is to be regretted that the manuscript was not published. Karsondas on account of his early death could not complete the work so much desired by him. He also could not satisfy his eager longing to visit

America. "Kutumb-Mitra" or "Family Friend"—this book in Gujarati was published by Karsondas in the early part of 1867. It was a small book containing imaginary dialogues composed in a jocular style with a view to instruct people. It was a revised collection of articles written by Karsondas in the "Satya Prakash" from 1855 to 1861. This book showed Karsondas's power of instructing people by his heavenly gift of humour. It also showed original powers of Karsondas in giving characteristic names to persons introduced in the dialogues befitting the parts taken by them.

"Pakhand Dharma Khandan Natak" or "The Drama for the destruction of fraudulent religion." This drama was written, about two hundred and forty years before Karsondas's time, by a Brahmin who believed in the Vedic faith. In this work, after reviewing the Buddhist and other faiths, the author exposes the conduct of the Maharajas by means of a drama. Karsondas got the work translated in Gujarati and then leaving aside a portion, he got the other portion published with a preface of his own.

"Nibandh Mala (2nd Part)." The 1st Part was published by Karsondas in 1870. It was a collection of his later contributions to different papers and periodicals. The first part dealt with only 104 articles written by Karsondas upto June 1860. The 2nd part could not be out, because of Karsondas's early death. This finishes our account of Karsondas's English and Gujarati works. What little education Karsondas had received yielded a singular increase of knowledge, and thereby of intelligence and efficiency, touching generations with new impulses and adding to his country's fitness

for affairs. Men exercising their powers for personal aggrandizement leave this world small, disquieted, beggared, with no enlargement of soul vouchsafed to them; but Karsondas did his work unselfishly for others and hence was like men multiplied. His powers were put out at interest, and he got usury in kind. His beneficence bred gratitude, gratitude bred admiration and admiration bred fame; and that is the reason why we celebrated the centenary of this great reformer who by pure and sincere writings did every thing that was possible for him to do for the reformation of his people. Karsondas acted as the spokesman of the few reformers of his time. Wherever Karsondas went he sought

To make the world within his reach,  
 Something the better for his being,  
 And gladder for his human speech.

The great and good Karsondas is dead, but like other great and good men he is not quite dead even in this world. Embalmed in his books, his spirit walks abroad. The memory of his beautiful life is a benediction softened and made more rich and expressive by the sorrow which his departure caused among a very large circle of his friends and admirers of all communities. All of Karsondas's books and writings are a celebration of Karsondas.

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Rajkote, 7<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1889.

My dear Dalpatram,

In the monthly returns  
of the progress of the Thakore School  
allow me to suggest that it  
would be better if you would  
in future add a column more to show  
the actual progress made -  
during each month.

Yours truly  
Karsandas Bhaiji

## CHAPTER V

## The Man

To be persistent in growth, intellectual and moral, and this through all changes and all chances, daunted by no adversity and crushed by no grief, is the stamp of genuine manhood.

We are surrounded by the living dead,  
 Men whose whole lives seem purposeless and vain;  
 They're bubbles in the air, husks, 'mid the grain,  
 Mere walking, flesh-piles, without heart and head.  
 To show they're men, they've nothing but the form,  
 They are not worth their daily meat and bread.  
 They're moved not by the grand and beautiful:  
 They have no soul whose mandate bids them steer  
 To duty's path, or glory's bright career.  
 As well preach God unto a fleshless skull.  
 Their life's a dream, a festering in the sun,  
 Snatched from this working earth, who'd miss  
 them? None!

Unlike the living dead whose description is given in this poem, Karsondas was a living man, every inch a man; and the purpose of this chapter is to show how this was true.

A writer says in his inimitable language: "It is the hardest thing in the world to preserve your individuality. All things tend to absorb you. The world is avid of your soul. The very stars are wolves upon your trail. Society is an unkenneled bloodhound that roams the world seeking whom it may devour. Time is shod in gum-shoes and its ferret eyes leer with



delight as it watches your soul crumble to the common level. Threatening missives are borne to you upon the winds, and the hint of penalties falls on your ear like rain-patter on a tin roof. Fear—that "obscene bird," Emerson calls it—circles over your soul like a kite amorous of carrion. The cabals of Doubt are always in session, and your tiny spirit flutters and flickers like a candle set near a wind-swept chimney. The whispering negations play over your soul like lambent flames on troubled waters. All things conspire against you. The thongs of habit rib your soul. "

In spite of its being the hardest thing to preserve one's individuality, Karsondas did preserve it. Each one of us has a life that is alone in its responsibility, in its danger, in its mission and duty. Karsondas fully understood the truth of personal responsibility. He knew that no one but himself could live his life, do his work, meet his obligation, bear his burdens, and that no one but himself could stand before God to render an account of his deeds. Karsondas endeavoured to find the right way of life, and having found it he walked in it. He had the will to do so; he had the power to be himself, and not the echo of somebody else. He thought and acted for himself as a reasonable, responsible being, and as God intended he should. He insisted on himself. He never imitated. He was a man of individuality. Although he was great as a citizen, greater as a reformer, it was in manliness that he was greatest.

In his collegiate career, on account of his reformed views regarding the question of re-marriage of widows, Karsondas had summarily to leave his aunt's shelter and for some brief period was thrown on his own

resources. This enabled him to enter into harmonious relations with himself, and to realise the full scope of self-reliance. This period afforded him experience which stood him in good stead in his after life. From his early life, Karsondas cherished ideals. His ideals were the working models set before him, the patterns after which and by which he had to shape his life. He was both a dreamer and a doer. He was a practical idealist. His ideals were his responsibilities. He dreamt his dreams of attainment and did his work of accomplishment. He made every bud expressing his love of perfection blossom into the flower of a perfect deed. He accepted and followed his ideals with fidelity and with that energy born of absolute faith in the Divine leading, and he found himself miraculously led and noticed all the obstacles, which appeared to be insurmountable in perspective, vanish as he came near and a way was made and a path appeared for him to walk in. His high ideals for performing a noble part in life stimulated his energies throughout his life. Noble ideals make noble men. Idealists are mankind's best friends.

Karsondas took counsel of his mind and relied on his own character. He did not bend or cringe to any existing institutions however popular, or pay idolatrous homage to any venerated name, but greeted with sovereign independence all accredited establishments and by thought and act announced that he was a personality who summoned all things to the bar of his own judgment.

Rev. W. J. Dawson says: "The moment we begin, upon our real convictions, to encourage within our minds the

growth of real thoughts, to ask not what is popular, but what is right; not what everybody does, but what we ought to do; at that time we become men."

Let us judge Karsondas from this standpoint, and we would see that Karsondas fully stood this test.

Every life has three aspects. All of us live three lives in one. We live to God, we live to ourselves and we live to one another.

The divine estimate of a man is not what riches, honours, or distinctions he has, but stripped of all these flimsy trappings, what is the man himself?

### **The kind of life that Karsondas lived to God.**

Karsondas was both a rationalist and an idealist. In his religious beliefs, his reason and idealism moved hand in hand. He believed that when ideals were sacrificed as irreconcilable with reason, then they resulted in rank materialism; he also believed that when reason was sacrificed as incompatible with idealism, the human spirit took refuge in all sorts of superstition and became a prey to priestcraft and to the various forms of spiritual hypnotism. We have seen, while dealing with Karsondas as the Hero of the Libel Case, that he used his reason and found out the serious drawbacks of the sect of the Maharajas in which he was born and bred and then entirely gave up going to temples. All the same he extremely yearned to establish a purer form of worship. He was disgusted at the Hindus playing at being religious. Their religion consisted only in putting on outward religious marks, in observing for mere show, caste distinctions, in making it an affair of going to temples and shouting "Je Je" while looking at idols with

folded hands. He noticed his Hindu brethren and sisters regarding attendance at temples, at certain times a day, as constituting the sum total of their religious duty, and devoting most of their thought to what may be termed "the millinery of the subject, the outside trimming." He saw that they neglected the great question which underlay all religion, the great truths and principles upon which all religions were built and left them very largely to look after themselves. He compared the state of the degraded sects of Hinduism with the reformed Christian religion and pronounced his emphatic verdict in favour of the latter. Just as Christian religious reformers said to Christians that if they wanted to know what Christianity in its fulness and simplicity was they must go back to the New Testament, so Karsondas said to Hindus that if they wanted to know what Hinduism in its pristine glory was they should look to the Hinduism of the Vedic period and not to its degraded forms of the Puranic period. Karsondas considered religion to be the backbone of morality and believed that people who became religiously indifferent too frequently become morally indifferent. He said:

"A man as much needs to worship God as he needs to be moral; and just as you need to be moral, so also equally you need to worship God. A man does not get salvation unless he has both religion and morality. A man must pay very great attention to both these. God has linked them together. No man can rend them asunder; and any man who does that will be guilty in the eyes of his Maker. The man who in this world remains both religious and moral alone will be a dear devotee of God. I want to show you that doing charity and philanthropy without the worship of God or to worship God without

morality is useless, because one neither gets much benefit by this conduct nor does one get heavenly happiness."

Karsondas's was the only real religion—the religion of goodness, of justice, and of mercy—the religion of humanity; and his whole actively useful life was the bud and flower and fruit of his purified Hinduism. Karsondas was firmly of opinion that the service of God was closely related with the service of man and therefore wished to mingle godliness, which was nothing more nor less than true religion, embodied in human character and action and to keep thoughts of God in his mind as he went about his daily work. He was not one of those people who were in a hurry to do something for their brethren, who counted it loss of time to seek His will. Such people who wore themselves out in doing often failed, because there was wanting that touch which only God's servant could give. Karsondas said:

"Men really get the pleasure, the happiness and the contentment of a pure, innocent conscience when in their persons are found a combination of devotion towards God and love towards His creatures. Such men's philanthropic nature makes them related to humanity; and their devotion towards God makes them tied to Him with the silken strings of great love."

Karsondas knew no intricacies of religion. He was not well versed in the ancient Hindu Scriptures. His knowledge of Sanskrit was nil. He believed in the existence of God. He understood the efficacy of prayer. He recognised the inner voice of the Divine Monitor. The whole of religion and morality was summed up in his philosophy in the two mighty rules—to love God and to

love our neighbours. Love of God was recognised by him to be service of men. This constituted the sphere of his whole duty in this world. He trusted himself to it, launched his public career of usefulness upon it, and sailed abroad in all directions, and found that it had no end and that it carried him safely round the world.

Karsondas's religion was the moving power of his life, the main-spring of his simple-hearted devotion to duty. His religious faith was simple, and he lived his religion as he believed, lived God's truth into life, so that his actions grounded themselves naturally on their religious basis.

We notice the truth of this assertion from the following beautiful prayer of his:

"O God! O Creator of the world! Give me power enough to discharge all my duties towards the members of my family and my relatives. Give me sufficient wisdom so that in all my work, I may observe perfect honesty and integrity, may fulfil all my promises, and may prove trustworthy of those who have reposed their confidence in me. ....O kind and benevolent God! Do good to me, to my family, to my neighbours, to my countrymen and to humanity. So dispense that they may be benefited in all ways. Give good sense to all those who act viciously and commit immoral actions. Lessen quarrels and strifes from this world. So ordain that all men may pass their time in peace and love and like each other. Perpetuate and ever keep safe the flag of that kind and benevolent Government, under whose shelter, I am living.....O God! I am a pilgrim of a few days sojourning in this world, therefore, enable me to live my life so well and wisely

that at the time of death time I may get a good place in heaven."

Organized Christianity was not purely a spiritual thing; it was not even ethical; it had become so present-worldly that it had almost ceased to be other-worldly. It had given Christians "delusions and illusions, dreams and visions, ceremonies and cruelties, faith and fanaticism, beggars and bigots, saints and slaves, miracles and mummeries, disease and death." Such organized Christianity had been civilised and the men to whom the honour must go for doing the work are Voltaire, David Hume, Thomas Paine, Thomas Huxley, Spencer, Darwin, Wallace, Robert Ingersoll and Charles Bradlaugh.

Similarly the honour of civilising Hinduism, and its defiled forms in the various sects of Hinduism must be given to noble souls like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Swami Dayanand, and to Karsondas also, though he had not the capacity to found a new reformed church as some of his over-zealous friends wished him to do. That Karsondas like an iconoclast exposed thoroughly all the vileness in the dogmas of the sect of the Maharajas, but did not found a new reformed church, is no reproach against him. In the very fact of his having knocked down all the rogueries and immoralities in one of the most degraded sects of Hinduism, Karsondas deserves to be highly honoured as one of the civilisers of Hinduism.

It is a peculiar thing to notice in the history of humanity, that those whose duty it was to reform religion did not do so. Take for example, Christianity. The true Christian ideal was not developed by those who were

set apart to develop it, not by the organisations whose very existence intended to contribute to that end. Slavery, for instance, was not abolished by organised Christianity. Ecclesiasticism defended slavery to the last. The anti-slavery movement did not grow up inside the Church, but outside the Church. The Reformation movement of Hinduism owes its origin and development also not to people whose duty it was to do so, nor to various religious organisations, but to laymen like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Swami Dayanand and Karsondas.

If a true rationalist drew a clear line of distinction between pure Vedic ideal of religion and its deformed and degraded forms so largely prevalent even to this day, the credit of that must be given to pure rationalists and idealists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Swami Dayanand and Karsondas Mulji.

. It is said that if our religion is not elevating and inspiring, our daily life would drag down our religion to its own level. All our actions must be governed by religion. Everything should be brought into the sweep of religion. One must therefore dedicate his self to God so that his whole life may be filled with the sense of possession, as belonging to Him. What we are is of more ultimate importance than what we do. The value of our actions is conditioned by what we are in heart and spirit. Consecration is the one and only effective way of seeing. Karsondas presented himself to God as a living sacrifice and did everything for God's eye and according to the principles of righteousness. Karsondas consecrated himself and thereby opened up his heart and life for the guidance of God. This consecration of



character purified his intentions and motives and created for him opportunities of influence, and made him offer his services to his countrymen in humility and sincerity.

### The kind of life that Karsondas lived to himself.

We have seen in the previous chapters, the whole career of Karsondas from his birth down till his death; and we have further seen that in his short life, he was eminently successful in, practically speaking, everything that he undertook. Karsondas was both an idealist and a practical man of the world. He was both a dreamer and a doer. His ideas were meant to be expressed. His visions were meant to be told. His attainment was meant to be demonstrated. Although we were not fortunate enough to see this illustrious Indian of thought and action, yet we have seen the times during which he was born, the mission that he had early in life resolved to carry out, and the successive bold steps he took to realize his dreams. We have had an unbiased and discerning view of our hero and we found that he had based his whole career on some good and desirable principles of life—some creative principles, which he willed determinedly; and it were these principles, like good seed sown in a fertile soil, that brought forth good demonstrable results. It were these right principles—impulses from within—that gave Karsondas the successive impulses towards the attainment of his life objects. It were these that were the most lasting guides and the life seed upon which his right action depended. These he exercised in his mental, moral, and spiritual life, whereby he subjected the bad or exhaustive principles of life to the purging severities of self-discipline and allowed greater scope and freedom to his creative

principles of life and conduct for their operation in the concerns of his every day life. This virtuous self-discipline kept him healthy and strong, and enabled him to keep in check the foibles and passions of his constitution.

Man has two creators. His God and himself. His first Creator furnished him the raw materiel of his life; and the laws in conformity with which he could make that life what he would. His second creator-himself-had marvellous powers which he rarely realized. "Conditions favourable or unfavourable to good character may be inherited, but thing itself, good character, cannot be inherited. It is a product, a beautiful fabric woven upon the loom of personal activity, constructed out of aspirations and prayers, visions of the ideal, high resolves, dreams of a juster relation to man and a happier communion with God; it is these turned into solid reality and shining like cloth of gold through the continuous effort of the faithful and successful will." It is what a man made of himself that counted. Man in his weakness was the creature of circumstances; man in his strength was the creator of circumstances. Whether he be victim or victor depended largely on himself. Every man, well or ill, managed and directed himself. He held the reins of his inner being, and for good, or else for evil, was in the last resort, his own ruler, his own counsellor, and his own physician.

I propose dealing with the inner life of Karsondas in three divisions:

**A. A FEW OF THE RULING OR CREATIVE PRINCIPLES OF KARSONDAS'S LIFE AND CONDUCT:**

1. Karsondas believed that the very supreme test of the life of the the spirit was to live it in the heart of human activities, and that the life that led to heaven was not a life of retirement from the world but a life of action in the world; and hence, he considered it incumbent on him to remain in the world and to discharge his duties there. He was not one of those who considered that a man attained salvation only by retiring into solitude and passing his whole life in meditation on the divine attributes. On the other hand, he was one who firmly believed that a useful citizen should remain in society, unspotted from its vices, and there discharge his duties to his Maker, to himself and to his people. Karsondas, by his noble life, proved that personal holiness was not incompatible with personal attention to every detail of human affairs.

2. Karsondas believed that God had given him his life for the higher purpose of fulfilling a particular mission for the benefit of his fellow beings and in this respect, he held his life to be a sacred trust and as belonging to the race. He held that what talents God gave him, He gave them for the use of mankind, and hence his was the example of a life given perfectly and wholly to the cause of man.

3. Karsondas believed that it was not only after death that our life should be held answerable to the heavenly test, but here and in this world, one must make his thoughts and his acts those that knew only the ideals of love and generosity and sweetness and courage. Karsondas believed that the presence of God was always with him and he lived his life in that faith. He also anticipated standing before His presence in the next world. He called up all his higher forces to meet

misunderstandings with patience and with love, to meet adverse fortune with courage and with stronger and more intense endeavour; to live above the tide of jar or fret, so as to dwell in perpetual radiance and sunshine of spirit.

4. Karsondas, applying the grand words of President Garfield of the United States, said of himself: "I do not think what others may say or think about me, but there is one man's opinion about me which I very much value, that is the opinion of Karsondas Mulji; others I need not think about. I can get away from them, but I have to be with him all the time. He is with me when I rise up and when I lie down, when I go out and when I come in. It makes a great difference whether he thinks well of me or not."

Karsondas laid greatest stress on self-respect, and believed all other qualities which contribute to the progress of society to spring from, or, at any rate, requiring self-respect and that it was the sense of self-respect, when trained and socialized, that did all the good work in the world. He further believed that it was only the self-respecting man or woman who respected his or her fellows and it was only he who felt he got his due that was solicitous and exact in seeing that others got their due. Like the great painters of the world, Rembrandt, Rosa Bonheur, and Michael Angelo, it was this keen sense of self-respect that made him work with a view to please his other self that stood over and behind him, looking over his shoulder, watching every act, word, and deed, knowing his every thought. Rembrandt was today recognised as a painter without a rival in portraiture because he never thought of any one but his Other Self, and so infused soul into every

canvas. Rosa Bonheur painted pictures just to please her Other Self and that is why she stood first among women artists of all time. Michael Angelo would not paint a picture to order. He said to them who wanted him to paint pictures to order: "I have a critic who is more exacting than you. It is my Other Self."

5. Karsondas, for the success of his reformation movement, attached the greatest importance to both thoughts and actions. He held the view that for a man desiring to act a noble part in life, there was no better stimulus than high ideals. The hope of having something better, grander, more useful to society than we now are, was held by him, to be a real inspiration. Further, it was essential that a man desirous of doing useful service should think for himself as a reasonable, responsible being, and as God intended he should be breaking free and flinging aside restraint if it retarded growth and progress. Karsondas thought great things, but failed not to make his castles in the air dwelling places upon earth. Wisely he understood the signs of the times. The signs of the times were the letters in which God spelled His name to each age. Karsondas therefore tried to spell the name of God out of the signs of the times. This knowledge he recognised as quite needful for his journey through life for the purpose of deriving the necessary help for himself as to what to do and what to trust. Action without ideas behind it, he held to be valueless. In the dark and difficult times in which he had to carry out his mission, he saw a spark of light in the darkness and proceeded patiently, with the whole weight of public opinion against him, to preach, educate and prepare the ground for the ultimate realization of his lofty ideal.

6. Karsondas was not discontented with the humble position in which he was placed. He did not desire commencing to do good only when he was in better circumstances, but definitely held the view, that whatever the place allotted to him by Providence, that for him was the post of honour and duty and that God estimated the worthiness or the worthlessness of a man's life not by the position he was in, but by the way in which he filled it.

7. Karsondas did not desire the sum and object of his life by seeming to be what he was not in reality. He hated show and hypocrisy and held that victories achieved by deceitful means did not last long. He said what he thought to be true and did what he felt to be right. To be and not to seem was his motto. In all passages of his life, Truth was his invincible armour.

8. Karsondas did not always look at the bright side of things, did not see the silver lining in every cloud. He did not believe that everything was as it ought to be and that everything was going to work for the best. He looked at life as a whole, his hope was always tempered by fear. He never considered any vantage ground so secure from assault that he might with impunity give up all further effort and cease to watch and strive. He did neither see only summer and harvest and sunshine nor storms, tempests and disasters. He considered his countrymen to be not so bad as might not be a great deal worse. He did not also consider his countrymen to be so good as might not be a good deal better. He did neither foolishly shut his eyes to the evil that was in the country nor shut his eyes to the good. He was neither an unthinking optimist nor a blind pessimist. Between the two extremes he chose the *via media*.

9. Karsondas believed that no real life of hopefulness, and buoyancy, and strength and gladness, and enthusiasm was possible to us without faith, and that unbelief numbed all the faculties, exhausted enthusiasm, dried up the very fountain of energy, and left a man helpless and unprotected in the shock and battle of life. He believed that men were saved by faith, they lived by it, and it was the greater part of their existence. Faith was held by him to be the very essential element in the life of a successful leader—faith in himself, faith in his principles, faith in the ultimate issue of his principles, and above all faith in God. Karsondas planted in belief and got the reward of his faith. Further, Hope and not Despair was the watchword of Karsondas the philanthropist. He held despair to be man's worst enemy because if he ever despaired of his countrymen's becoming better, that in itself would be the greatest obstacle in the way of their betterment. He, therefore, always hoped in the possibility of the redemption of his people. Further, Karsondas had the courage of the right type, one that was not venturesomeness, one that was not indifferent to huge odds or hidden perils. His courage was of the type, which knowing the worst, with clear calm vision, extricated the chances and braved the whole man to encounter the issue—one which met difficulties with an unshaken step and remained of good cheer in the darkness and witnessed to inward inalienable worth. Karsondas had, besides, that kind of moral courage which arose from a sense of duty and from a fear of offending Him who made us. It was this courage that made him put calm reliance on the decisions of reason which made him careless of the undeserved applause of his neighbours and which enabled him to speak out his mind when he should do so, to hold his tongue when

it was better that he should be silent, to admit when he was in the wrong, to make good resolves for future guidance, to decline taking wine, eating animal food, putting wagers on horse races, and associating with immoral spiritual guides.

Karsondas believed that heaven and hell were never outside us but were always inside. To the man who had the trinity of faith, hope and courage, the world was never a waste, howling wilderness, nor a vale of tears; but to the man who was lacking in these qualities, the world was never anything else. Hence Karsondas held to be a man's duty, to cultivate faith, hope and courage, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of those around him, for the pessimistic soul was a nuisance to himself, and to every one else with whom he came into contact.

10. Karsondas thought it essential for public workers that they should master well the subjects in which they wanted to specialize. He held the view that to present an appeal or a remonstrance to an irreflective, illiterate and ignorant public, steeped in obsolete customs and superstitions, with good expectation of success, there must be mastery of facts, and complete loyalty to Truth.

11. Karsondas held that true life began when the purpose of life was fixed. He held concentrated purpose to be the secret of the success of all reformers and philanthropists who changed stagnation for new life and corruption for purified springs of vigour. Every man desiring to leave footprints on the sands of time should therefore consciously cherish an honest purpose in life, founded on a just estimate of himself and everything else, on frequent self-examination, and a steady obedience to what he knew to be right, without troubling himself about what others thought or said. Karsondas, therefore, crowned



his life with an object, directed it by a purpose, and inspired by an enthusiasm, till the very humblest routine carried out conscientiously for the sake of God, was elevated into moral grandeur, and the very obscurest office that he filled conscientiously, at the bidding of God, became an imperial stage on which all his virtues played.

12. Karsondas held the views (a) that there was no night but had its miracle, no period of darkness either for the individual or the race that out of it was not born some angel of help or benediction; (b) that our better nature was moulded and fashioned in pain and we got into our truest inheritance through suffering; (c) that it was only in the heavy storms of trial, in adversity, in some pain or loss, that the richest, noblest music came from our souls; (d) that night would never be longer than was for our good—in other words that the night was but for a little space, but that which grew out of the night, belonged to the things that were immortal and imperishable; (e) and therefore it behoved workers in good causes to bury their sorrow, not in lethargic quiescence, but in active service, in other words to have the power to work under a stroke, to have a great weight at his heart and still to run, to have a big grief in his soul and still to work, to have a deep anguish in his spirit and still to perform the daily task.

Karsondas's views on pain and trouble were as follows:—

"These are two cousins... There is not a single man in the world who is born or to be born who is not visited by them. If this is a fact, then why should we be afraid to meet them. Those who are afraid get themselves doubly entangled. In their company, instead

suffering losses, we reap, on the contrary, benefits. In their company, we get a good knowledge of Divine power, we learn to walk on the straight and right path. We must be truly courageous to meet these two cousins. This kind of courage is not to be had by having bodily strength or by having haughty temper. It is born in us by our good deeds and righteous actions. Those who are really courageous are not at all afraid to meet these cousins. Every man who meets with either trouble or pain, it is truly courageous on his part, to endure the same with patience."

13. Karsondas considered his body to be the handmaid of his soul. His body was recognised by him as the temple of his soul and his soul as the sanctum sanctorum of his Maker. He acted on the principle that the vessels of the Lord must be clean.

14. Karsondas held the belief that a public worker must be well-balanced to be of the most value to himself and to his people and to humanity. He must not waste his substance in riotous living. He must have a proper adjustment of mind, will, conscience and body. He must judiciously use his time, money, strength, labour, brain power. The conserving spirit will be of the best value to him and through him to the world. Karsondas wanted man to follow Nature, who while most lavish, was never wasteful. He advised people always to have some reserve power to aid them in rebuilding the body and the mind, and wished them to cultivate the faculty of economy or the faculty of making the most of what one had, by deep thought and the rigid application of sure and sound principles.

15. Karsondas considered it our duty to endeavour to be as cheerful as we possibly could, both when we were in perfect health and when we were under weakness

and pain, because one without joy lacked ambition and was filled with apathy and hence without spirit to undertake, to do and to dare. He specially wished philanthropists to take thought for others, and to spare them, and to be sympathetic with their joys and troubles, when pain forced them to be self-conscious, and long endurance tempted them to become self-centred. Believing that a morose person repelled desirable persons, conditions, and forces, Karsondas lived a cheerful life. He did not go through the world as though he was following invisible funeral processions all through his days. He did not consider it a virtue to be miserable. He believed that only the labour of joy produced the crown of success. He held cheerfulness to be a wonderful tonic like a few grains of musk. He was of opinion that a cheerful disposition scented the very atmosphere of life, coloring its actions with various tints of joy and pleasure, and illuminating with a glow of love everything that came within its radiance. Hence he wished all public workers cheerfully to take up the duty that lay nearest to them, to put their shoulders to the wheels of activity and to become absorbed in some congenial work, and then they would invite glad thoughts, radiant surroundings and enter upon a pathway of cheerfulness.

16. Karsondas considered honesty, home, culture, humanity and spirituality to be better than money. In his view, true wealth consisted in health, vigour and courage, domestic quiet, public liberty, and plenty of all that was necessary. He entertained a certain regard for money that he may secure the happiness of his dependents and the necessities and comforts of his life; but he detested men gaining money at the expense of honesty, growing up in ignorance of all that refined and elevated.

the mind while gathering riches, such men becoming mean and stingy, close-fisted and selfish, men who made an idol of their wealth, and who gaining it, had allowed it to come between them and God and thereby lost their souls.

17. Karsondas believed in the Christian Scriptural injunction:—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." He had the happy habit of always doing his best, of throwing his whole heart and soul into his life's work. He sought his life's nourishment in his thoroughness. He felt throbbing within him, the power to do what he undertook as well as it can possibly be done, and all of his faculties said "Amen" to what he was doing, and gave their unqualified approval to his efforts. He was fired by a determination which knew no defeat, which cared not for hunger or ridicule and laughed at want and disaster. By his habit of thoroughness, he derived soul-satisfaction and became happy.

18. Karsondas held that a very intensive intercourse with men stifled many a noble impulse and therefore thought a certain degree of solitude and retirement to be quite necessary for the full growth and spread of the highest mind, because it was in solitude that great principles were first thought out, and the genius of eminent men formed, for solitude was essential to any depth of meditation or of character and was the cradle of thoughts and aspirations. Karsondas held that society was necessary to give us our share and place in the collective life of humanity, but solitude was necessary to the maintenance of a complete individual existence outside of it.

19. Karsondas held it a cardinal maxim of his life, always to hate the vices of men but not men themselves,

and whenever it became necessary for him to criticise or correct, he thought it wise to cherish deep love in his heart so that he may truly seek the good of those in whom he detected flaws or errors, and may not criticize in a spirit of pride and exultation. Karsondas warred against opinions, not against men. He hated the creeds; he never hated the persons who held them.

20. Karsondas held it honourable to admit one's mistake; he, therefore, desired public workers not to be ashamed to confess that they had been in the wrong, and thought that doing so was but owning what they need not be ashamed of, because now they had more sense than before, to see their error, more humanity to acknowledge it, and more grace to correct it.

21. Karsondas did not like people to wait in translating good thoughts of their minds into action. He said: "Whenever you are slightly inclined to do a good deed, without waiting for a single moment, try to carry out that thought into deed."

22. Karsondas held the view that precept and practice should go together. He never advised people to practise that which he was not willing to do himself. His life accorded with his teachings and therefore his admonitions were beautiful. Like Tolstoy, he saw the utter uselessness of preaching what he never intended to practise. People persuaded other men more by the lives they led rather than by their words. People retarded social progress by living inconsistently with their own high talk. Karsondas wished public workers to hold their tongues until they had assured that they had right earnestly begun the career of self-regeneration and reformation. He wanted reformers going forward to advocate purity of living and a

higher standard of private, domestic and social morals and plead for the claims of justice, charity, sympathy and toleration, to lead lives pure and stainless and free from the weaknesses which they themselves condemned. Karsondas himself was what he wanted all men to become and in being so, he became a power in society more than he could ever have been by mere speech alone. He strongly held the view that public and private lives of leaders should be of one consistent mould.

23. Karaondas knew that a soft social life was not likely to be noble, because in that kind of life, a man could hardly tell whether his faiths and feelings were real or not. It was only when he was attacked that he could test them. He knew how to distinguish between the evil and the good. In his view, evil things were those which dwarfed and spoiled and robbed men of their moral strength and destroyed the beauty of holiness and the bloom of virtue and hardened the heart against the cry of human needs. He knew that anything that made people less kind and gentle and pitiful was evil; but that which made for gentleness and patience and brotherly kindness was good, however, evil or painful it may be or seem to be, at the time. He believed that if good resulted from a man's pain, poverty, sorrow or loss then they were life's richest treasures.

The principles enunciated above were living and victorious certainties to Karsondas, and he had the intense faith in the ultimate issue of those principles; he, therefore, built his whole life on the rock that is, he had as the basis of his character—great eternal principles. Karsondas lived his great principles.

(B). THE SILENT WAYS IN WHICH KARSONDAS'S CHARACTER WAS REVEALED.

A man revealed his personality through his countenance, through his dress, through his friends, through his writings, through his likes and dislikes and in various silent ways.

Karsondas was a man of good tastes. His whole appearance told a good deal and told it more subtly than he could. His appearance was a credit to himself. To a great extent, his countenance was the portrait of his soul. It was his reference card, a testimonial letter. His soul, full of pure and generous affections, fashioned his features into its own beautiful likeness, as the rose by inherent impulse grew in grace and blossomed in loveliness. Karsondas passed for what he was worth. What he was, engraved itself on his face, on his form, on his features, in letters of light. He had a bright, honest, straightforward look. "Of all the media through which we proclaim our character to the world, perhaps none spoke so unerringly as the eye." The eye could not be taught to lie, it marked the soul's intentions. Karsondas's honest and fearless eyes showed his purest motives and was more than a hundred recommendations. His virtue looked out of his eyes. He believed that the important outward mark of a personality was clothes. Karsondas dressed as well and becomingly as his means allowed and his position required. He never dressed showily or expensively. He put on always neat and clean clothes. His clothes gave a clue as to what he was, what he wanted to be, what he liked to do. They led the people, with whom he came in contact to know all they wanted to know about him. Everything around Karsondas showed his taste for neatness and cleanness. He was thoroughly

conscious of his being scrupulously clean in every particular. This fact was a great source of his real strength. It quickened his thought, increased his ability, strengthened his ambition, stimulated his energy and vitality and enhanced his dignity and self-respect. His conversation also revealed his personality. His words were photographic, picturing the character, the temper, the disposition, and the intellectual resources behind him. Karsondas did not hide his best self as if he was ashamed of it. He took courage and spoke out of his deepest convictions, his highest aspirations, and suddenly found that he had entered into sound companionship with his fellows, and the breath of this fervour had stirred the same fire of nobleness in them that burned in him. He gave a tone to the company in which he was and to the society in which he lived. He was a friend, counsellor and inspirer to those who knew him. He was loved because he scattered flowers of good wherever he moved. Everything he did acted like letters of the alphabet which spelt out his biography, that may be read like an open book by all who saw him. The kind of his eminent friends of all communities pursuing different walks of life showed unmistakably how high his aspirations soared. Karsondas's writings were all meant to improve the social, moral, physical, intellectual and social condition of his people. His speeches and addresses were saturated with his own convictions and did not fail to produce real effect. Witness the tone of his writings :

"O Man! if you are daily praying and offering thanks to your Creator, if you are loving your fellow brethren and humanity, if you are helping the poor according to your means, if you are keeping your conscience clean and pure, if you are showing kindness and



mercy in all your worldly dealings, and if you are trying your utmost to be helpful in this world, there is no religion which will not compensate you for all this goodness and there is no religion which says that God will not be pleased with conduct of this character."

"I know that if I do good actions, if considering all persons as my brothers I help them in all times of trouble and anxiety, if in all my worldly dealings I observe thorough honesty and integrity, if I keep my conscience bright and pure, in short, if being afraid of God, I obey His commandments, then after my death, I shall have eternal happiness, I shall be transferred to such a place where there is no death, where there is nothing like anxiety and trouble, pain and disease, a place which is called Heaven or "Vaikunth" the happiness of which place, I am unable even to dream at present."

#### KARSONDAS'S LIKES.

Karsondas desired Indian reformers to improve the social condition of their people by different means such as publishing of enlightened literature, well-thought out articles in press and periodicals, speeches and debates on the burning topics of the day. Karsondas recognised the Press as a mighty instrument in the spread of healthy public opinion; but wished journalists to use the same honestly and for the good of the people and not with a view to blackmailing. He wished reformers to begin and not wait for others, to be bold in prosecuting their projects and to be persistent in their endeavours till the achievement of final success. Their advocacy of reforms must be reinforced by their consistent character. They should advocate the abolition of mental slavery in the form of false fears about castes, the giving up of false

caste-distinctions, the breathing of a pure atmosphere, free from superstitious customs, and such other matters as hamper the advancement of Indians. He advised reformers to strike the iron while it was hot and thereby to accelerate the speed of the reformation. Karsondas, in matters of religion, wanted Indians to know the tenets of their own religion, to purify their religion which was degraded by false accretions, and to insist on their spiritual preceptors to be learned enough to offer good prayers, to preach to their votaries correct notions of religion and morality, and above all to be moral and religious themselves. Karsondas desired his countrymen to cultivate the noble attributes of self-respect, of adventure and enterprise. For the purpose of making Indians come to know and love one another, he advocated the adoption of one language-Hindi-and one script-Devnagri. He desired to see that Indians took physical exercise and kept their bodies in a serviceable condition. Karsondas recognised the status of women in a country to be a correct index of the state of its civilisation; he therefore loved to honour women and to have their status in life improved, by not allowing them to be mere literates but by giving them proper education. He desired Indians of high position to cease marrying uneducated girls, so that Indian parents might see the necessity of educating their daughters. He desired rich and high-positioned women to take up the noble careers of sisters of mercy like their English sisters. In this way, he desired some Indians, like their fellow-brethren in civilised countries of the West, to devote their lives in highly beneficial works of humanity. Karsondas recognised the place of boarding schools to be a necessity for affording proper facilities to

students to prosecute their studies unhampered by parental indulgence. He desired Indian children to go in for higher collegiate education, and advised their parents not to spare money for this purpose. He recognised the necessity of all Indians studying politics, arts and crafts, and among them, he wished the rich to study several sciences including the science of politics. He wished that those rich Indians, who were engaged in professional works, should also spare some time in useful studies. India being an agricultural country, and agriculture being a recognised profession of high merit, it should be taken up by rich people and they should introduce in it new methods. Karsondas wanted Indian artisans to have healthy rivalry among themselves, Indian ryots to be literate, Indians to go to civilised countries, and specially rich Indians to cultivate a taste for foreign travel and to visit foreign civilised countries so that they could utilise their wealth to the best advantage for the good of the people. Karsondas loved beautiful buildings, sincere friends, friendship with persons of superior merits than his own and with members of all communities, neatness and cleanness in dress and personal belongings, a quiet, calm and beautiful place for study, and the practice of real philanthropy. His salient traits were to conscientiously discharge his duties without swerving an hair's breadth by temptations, to perform paid service most honourably to the entire satisfaction of one's masters, to be industrious, to do every work, be it paid or voluntary, with one's heart and soul, to take time in forming one's life purposes, but when once formed, to get them realized with patience and perseverance, to be active members of societies of which he may be a member, and not to

remain a figure-head, to dispense impartial justice blended with the divine quality of mercy, and to keep up the studious habit of reading papers, periodicals and good books. Karsondas advocated starting of a fund for the maintenance of the blind and the crippled; he favoured the opening of free public libraries, founding of a society for pointing out right morals and spiritual paths to people, the starting of many schools for the education of girls, the opening of an institution for lending money at low interest to every aspirant willing to travel to foreign lands for learning different pursuits, the starting of many commercial firms in England for trade purposes, the starting of societies for supporting indigent widows, for supporting indigent children, for helping families suffering from misery, for preventing immorality among people, for improving the condition of labourers and ryots, for protecting lives in fire and other great calamities, for preventing infanticides, and for affording encouragement and assistance to the reformers of the country,

#### **KARSONDAS'S DISLIKES.**

Karsondas hated hypocrisy, sham and immorality. He hated wasting of precious time in mere gossip, and taking of aggressive measures. He did not like people to have recourse to litigation as it was harmful to both the parties. He disliked intensely the practices of administrators harassing people in various ways as to enrich the Rajas' private purses. On principle, he did not like to take animal food, and wished all to desist from taking intoxicating drugs or drinks in any form whatsoever. He hated English dances as likely to lead to immorality and the English habit of gambling at the Derby races. False show of religion, ignorance of one's religious scriptures, and worship of stocks and stones he detested.

He disliked rich people inviting many people to public dinners, and the rich people being honoured even when they purchased honours. He was against people following old customs in the name of religion without considering whether to do so was advisable or not. The life of dependence and the credulity largely prevalent among Indians he disliked. He hated indiscriminate charity such as feeding of able-bodied beggars, ignorant Brahmins, and wandering Sadhus. He disliked showy charity of rich people through the means of fraudulently acquired wealth. He wanted middle-class people, on important occasions, not to spend beyond their means. Males putting on 'dhoturs' which flew about in streets and exposed occasionally their nakedness and women putting on bodices, called "Kanchlis," which exposed to some extent their naked bodies was against his wish. He liked people to give up indecent behaviour at the festival called "Holi". He advised his countrymen to give up false caste-distinctions, following up of hereditary professions, observing the custom of enforced widowhood resulting in abortions and infanticides, the custom of early marriages, consulting of astrologers, wasting of large sums of money beyond their means on marriage, pregnancy and death ceremonies, calling of singing girls leading a life of prostitution. He disliked English women constricting their waists and thereby spoiling their health. He was against their spending large sums of money in costly dresses. False modesty of Indian women he disliked. He did not like Indian ladies putting on thin 'sarees' heavy ornaments for the purpose of deceiving people and he advised them to give up the same because it harmed them and to put on light ornaments of good workmanship.

## TRAITS IN KARSONDAS'S CHARACTER.

Karsondas was a righteous man. He abstained from sin, in thought, word and deed. Slander, envy, hatred, malice never reached him nor caused him suffering. He committed no acts which required stealth, and harboured no thoughts which he would not like others to know. Where truth and right were concerned, he was firm as God. He did what he felt to be right, said what he thought to be true. He bore witness to the truth he taught. He had faith, hope, love and courage. He had faith in himself, faith in the ultimate success of his mission, and faith in God. His hope enabled him to work with vim and vigour. Clean and kind was his heart. It was attuned to the sweet chords of holy love. He made no compromise with self, and ceased not to strive until his whole being was swallowed up in love. He lived in love and therefore his heart went out in love to all. Through the golden key of love, he was able to appeal to all hearts. With a fortified mind, he resisted the encroachments of the selfish and did not allow any one to side-track him from his aims and ambitions. He had only recourse to one stimulant that never failed and yet never intoxicated. It was duty. Duty was no abstract precept with him, but part of his very being. It consisted of the love of God and man which made the life of an individual, the expression of all that he believed to be the absolute or relative truth. He discharged his duties so conscientiously that he heard music at midnight. The happiness that he experienced was the natural flower of the duties he fulfilled. His source of duty was God and His laws; the object of his duty was mankind. The measure of his duty was the

demands of the period; and the limit of his duty was his own power. He cast away his petty cravings, vanities and ambitions as worthless garments and dwelt in the loving, compassionate regions of the soul. He gave freely of his time, labour, thought and energy for the good of his countrymen. He had a burning love of goodness. He never put away the simplicity of a child. He had moral excellence. He was both studious and industrious. He knew the limitations of his powers. He had patience and perseverance. He was always sociable, always kind. He conversed amiably. He was humble without cringing, dignified without being haughty, active without being either brusque or petulant. His courtesy towards all was the finishing grace of his fine personality. He bore the stamp of whitest sincerity. His personal habits were neat and clean. This trait of his was a powerful bulwark against temptations. It helped his character, self-respect, self-confidence, and moral power. His benevolent thoughts made his mind receive and send out good thoughts. His benevolent words, by the law of reciprocity, drew to himself most strengthening vibrations. He exercised the spirit of goodwill by always speaking words of encouragement and hope. By his earnest efforts and uplifting suggestions, he enriched many minds and comforted many hearts. His benevolent acts made him firm in doing rightly and justly. All the pioneer work he was able to do successfully was due to his burning earnestness. His enthusiasm tingled in every fibre of his being, to do the work that his heart desired; it brooked no interference with the accomplishment of its object. His tact enabled him to make his projects successful. He had despatch in his work. He had emotional sensibility.

He united in himself the natural man and the "eternal feminine." It was on account of this trait that occasionally Karsondas became nervous, but speedily remembering the lives of great men who had endured much, he regained his self-confidence. His magnanimity made him disdain injustice and meanness and prompted him to sacrifice personal ease, interest and safety for the accomplishment of useful and noble objects. He resisted the tyranny of the multitude. He thought out problems for himself and was never drawn into a suffocating groove with a crowd of unthinking minds. He was deliberate in his purpose, firm and resolutely loyal to deliberately formed convictions, bold in enterprise and unwearied in achieving. He honoured women and had their good at his heart. It is truly said that one of the keenest and surest tests that we could apply to a man was this: How did he treat women? The man who rang false there was not to be trusted anywhere. Karsondas stood this test well. His aesthetic faculty was well-cultivated. It was this faculty that made him love good music, to love having his study in beautiful surroundings, and to have beautiful buildings. His love of beauty had a very important moral and intellectual bearing on his character. Karsondas was free from self-consciousness, envy, jealousy, reserve, and shyness. He did not act in pride or in a spirit of rivalry. He was not puffed up by success; and at the same time, if he did not achieve success as expected, he was not unnerved. He did not like to do many things indifferently but did few things in a superior manner. He did not like people to be litigious. He was entirely free from vices like sexual immorality, drunkenness, etc. His life motto was Truth, Purity, Goodness and Simplicity. He had a weak body but had tremendous energy of the



spirit. He was a clear-minded, candid, honest, brave and loving man. Karsondas had great trust in his mission. He believed that God had given him a part to fulfil and if he did his part carelessly, slurred over or spoiled the same, he would do an injury which no one could repair. His expectation was the hope of being somewhat nobler, grander, more useful to society than he was. He cared not for wealth or fame, but always aimed at nobility of character and the good of his people. Not for himself did he live. His every action had an ancestry and a posterity in other lives. He was ever ready to render a service, to forget wrongs, and to suffer for others without making any one suffer.

Karsondas had thus in him all the attributes of essential greatness. He was a character man, an aristocrat of character. He was a true patriot, an honest citizen and a perfect gentleman. He was really a man, dear to God, beloved by friends, and honoured by his fellow-countrymen.

We have seen so far, all the aspects of Karsondas's inward life or the life of thought. We will now look to his outward life or the life of behaviour that he lived.

#### THE LIFE THAT KARSONDAS LIVED TO ONE ANOTHER.

A large part of our every day life is spent in the exercise of relations, in the discharge of various offices which have to do with others. These relations may be well or ill exercised. These offices may be well or ill-discharged. But in some way or other, they must of necessity be exercised and discharged by all of us. No man in this sense could altogether live to himself. He must affect others. He must, unless he

would absolutely go out of the world, act upon and act towards other men. Woodrow Wilson is right when he says: "A man is the part he plays among his fellows. He is not isolated; he cannot be. His life is made up of the relations he bears to others—is made or marred by those relations, guided by them, judged by them, expressed in them. There is nothing else upon which he can spend his spirit—nothing else that we can see. It is by these he gets his spiritual growth; it is by these we see his character revealed, his purpose, and his gifts.' I propose dealing under this head, the life Karsondas lived as a citizen, as a son, as a husband, as a father, as a friend, as a student, as a teacher, and as an administrator

**KARSONDAS AS A CITIZEN.**

Good citizenship does not depend upon the possession of wealth, power, or social position. It is a matter of personal character or worth, of faithful fulfilment of duty, and of enlightened ideals of patriotism. He only, whether rich or poor, was a good citizen whose life's work was fraught with usefulness to the State. Such a person living in a city was active in seeing the common good of all and took interest in and worked for the health, happiness and moral life of the people and worked to that end. His civic conscience prompted him to find his own good in the good of his brother-citizens. Such a person leads the life of the good neighbour and honest citizen.

Everything a man did, every one of his actions, affected some one else for better or for worse. Man could not be himself alone. His life either helped forward or dragged down and injured other lives. None could escape the universal law. If a person had any manliness in his character, he would desire to help and assist rather

than to distress and injure other people. Science told us that the shifting of the tiniest pebble altered the balance of the globe; and, in the same way, any one of our actions—even the smallest—may be attended with consequences immeasurably great. Every person in the State exercised some influence upon those around him. His life and conduct were, therefore, of importance even to his fellow-citizens.

The first steps towards good citizenship lay in a man's character. Character was the bed-rock of all citizenship. We have already had a glimpse of Karsondas's character and that has showed us that his greatness belonged to character, rather than to status or circumstances.

A citizen must perfect his personality by doing social service; but the first step towards this perfection was to learn to think for himself. A good citizen must think and feel for himself, for that full-self which took clear and orderly account of all social relations and the duties and satisfactions they involved. The economy of his social conduct, as member of a family, neighbour, citizen, patriot, human being, he must think out and use for himself, and must not permit the gusty violence of some mob passion, in whatever respectable garb that passion clothed itself, to usurp the authority of private judgment.

Karsondas was an ideal, honest citizen and an intelligent patriot, who discharged his voluntary duties to his family, his caste, and community at large, to the best of his power. The very fact that he decided to leave his aunt's shelter for his reformed views showed that his heart intensely felt for young women who had to lead a life of enforced widowhood. He longed much to effect

reforms in the Hindu society; but he became helpless. He had to earn his livelihood; but no sooner that was secured, down till his death, he served his masters most faithfully and never allowed his service to come in his way of doing his utmost for the good of the people. Under difficult domestic circumstances, the spirit of service and sacrifice that he showed was admirable. Even before he secured his first service, at the Gokuldas Tejpal Seminary, in 1853, he read a paper on the advantages of foreign travel before the Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha. Since the time he was appointed a teacher in the above-named school, he fully utilized his spare time in thinking out different plans for the good of his people and wherever practicable he carried the same in life. The Gokuldas Seminary was at Mandvi and Karsondas's residence was in Fort, yet Karsondas took upon himself the honorary work of teaching in the schools and personally supervising the management. He also worked as an examiner in these schools. He lectured before the Sabha, whose head quarters were in the Kalbadevi locality—a locality at a good distance from his Fort residence. He wrote articles on social reform in the weekly paper "Rast Gofar;" but later on, finding that writings in the Parsi paper were not sufficient, he started in 1855, the first pioneer weekly newspaper, under an attractive but characteristic title of "Satya Prakash" or "Light of Truth," and till its separate existence in the year 1860, for nearly five years, without having any remuneration, edited the paper with ability and integrity. Throughout the life of the paper, Karsondas fully justified the noble title of the paper. The paper became a powerful and effective organ of the reformers' party in Bombay. He had kept the price of the paper to be nominal, because the ideal

with which the paper was started was a purely philanthropic one. Throughout his life, he remained a member of the Sabha. For four years he remained a member of its Managing Committee, and as such, did good work; and this became evident that when he left Bombay for Deesa, he was given an Address by the Sabha. For the pioneer work of starting a special paper for the good of the Hindu community and writing therein fearlessly able articles for ameliorating the condition of his people, he was honoured in 1857, first in a private meeting of his Gujarati friends and admirers. From this onwards, we have seen that he continued discharging his duties as a citizen very ably. He was never in affluent circumstances; he was keeping poor health; yet to withstand all sorts of temptations and discharge his duties conscientiously spoke volumes in his favour. When he went to England, and when he served as a high officer at Rajkot and Limree, he fulfilled his duties in an independent spirit without caring at all for the frowns of his superior officers or favours of his people. Throughout his life, in all public work, he had acted as a pure and simple philanthropist. The high sense of citizenship that he had, accounted for the purity of his public life and for his not having left a large fortune at his death. He never liked to be a figure-head in any institution with which he was connected. If he accepted any post, he would try his best to fulfil the duties attached to it. When Karsondas went to England in 1863, in his reply to the Address of the Sabha among other things he said: "Looking to the good object with which the Sabha is founded, it appears that I have not been able to devote as much time as I ought to have. For this I express my great regret". While at Rajkot, besides his administrative

duties, he did not neglect to pay attention to social reform work. He delivered lectures before the public. He was an energetic member of the "Vidya Guna Prasarak Sabha". In 1868, at his suggestion, the periodical "Vignan Vilas" was started; but when he left Rajkot for a higher post at Limree, he expressed his regret for not being able to send his literary contributions to that periodical. At Rajkot, he was the President of the Girls' School. In his social life, he behaved so well with all persons with whom he came in contact, that the Jain and Mehishri Baniyas, unlike the Kapole Baniya community, unasked, honoured themselves by freely interdining with him and his family. Even in private life, he helped people who came to see him by giving them proper advice. Karsondas advised all people on principle to give up taking any intoxicating drinks. In his leisure hours, Karsondas wrote books. At Limree, in 1870, he was appointed an honorary president of the Limree Library. He was also the Patron of this Library. He presented good many books to this Library; and also presented for its Reading Room, his private papers and periodicals. The first widow-remarriage among the Kapole Baniyas was brought about by Karsondas while he had been to Bombay from Limree. The late Mr. K. N. Kabraji writing a leading article in the Rast Goftar on Karsondas after his death said: "The late Karsondas had managed to bring about this remarriage with such zeal, care and rejoicing, as if his own children were to be married; and it was a fortunate circumstance that Karsondas gave all help on this occasion; but for it, we have very great doubt, whether the re-marriage would have come off so successfully as it did."

Throughout his life, Karsondas, during his leisure hours, wrote useful and instructive books and contributed articles to papers and periodicals, thus showing that as a citizen, he never forgot his debt to enlighten his people on true reforms. Karsondas held the view that for the welfare of the people, individuals must do philanthropic work. He set such a noble example that wherever he went, he always won golden opinions of his people. In Bombay, the strength of the orthodox party being great, it was no wonder that his work was not much appreciated; but the fact that he was presented three Addresses, on the eve of his departure for England, by the Sabha, by the editors of the Vernacular papers and periodicals, and by the Khoja reformers and these being by different communities showed that during Karsondas's lifetime, the enlightened portion of Indians thoroughly appreciated his work, so much so that an eminent Bombay citizen like Dr. Bhau Daji said: "Mr. Karsondas's example shows how much good it is in the power of a person, of comparatively humble circumstances, to effect, when guided by pure motives or by well-directed and judicious effort." He helped popular causes by spending himself and by spending his money. He never spent his time in gossip and idleness. Although he was a Vaishnava, when he found that the Vaishnava Maharajas were not worthy of any honour because of their immoral conduct, he thought it his duty to take measures to have them improved. Unlike other timid reformer friends of his, he thought it his public duty to cure his society of one of its worst scandals. He neither in his speeches nor in his writings ever advised people about matters which he was not willing to practise himself. As a citizen, his

reputation was good. Not a single opponent of his had yet been found who ever suspected him of either unscrupulousness or immorality. In a circle of many mercenary editors, he was pure, in a circle of credulous and superstitious Vaishnava votaries, he was a man of pure religion. He hated immorality and it was because of this trait that he carried on a tough fight against the Maharajas and braved all risks. At Rajkot, owing to Karsondas's amiable personality, the Baniya Mahajan passed a rule to allow all its members to go to foreign countries without any caste hitch whatsoever.

Karsondas repaid his society, by his good services, all the benefits that he had received from it. If Karsondas had decided in the early part of his career, to devote his time to mercantile pursuits, no doubt, he would have become a rich man; but his mind was full of noble ideas and ideals, and therefore he first contented himself to get sufficient for his and his family's maintenance, so as to afford him time and leisure to do public work. To be in service, and to discharge the duties of that service honourably and at the same time to discharge the onerous duties of a citizen in various capacities as a speaker, an author, and a journalist and that too with credit to himself, showed that his heart and mind were always very anxious to do in all practical ways, good to his people. At the time of the Maharaja Libel Case, his opponents tried by all means to silence Karsondas. Karsondas's life was in imminent danger. His friends who posed themselves as reformers were helping him secretly; yet no one dared to do so openly. Karsondas was a poor man, and any other man in his place, being persecuted in all ways, would have at



once apologized and made for himself a fortune. Even after his return from England, practically all of his friends, who had the goodness to come to the Apollo Bunder to wish him bon voyage proved unfaithful. And among the rest there were some, who stood by him in the beginning, deserted him afterwards. If Karsondas had ignominiously agreed to perform the 'Pryaschit' or penitential ceremony, he and his family would have been re-admitted to the Kapole caste, but he would have thereby ruined for a long time the progress of reform and would have degraded his name for ever; but he was not a counterfeit coin; he hated hypocrisy and firmly declined to perform the ceremony, when he had done nothing wrong or sinful to repent. Throughout his work as a citizen, he had done nothing to bring discredit on himself. On account of this wise decision, not only Karsondas remained excommunicated both from his caste and the whole Mahajan, but his whole family had also to suffer this penalty with him. The penalty of excommunication was the greatest instrument of torture in the hands of the orthodox people during Karsondas's time, and how hard it was, only those persons who have vivid imagination can alone realize. When Karsondas had brought about the widow re-marriage of Dhankore, the caste people had passed an all-embracing resolution of excommunication which brought in its net a large number of people. The social punishment of excommunication was applied not to the re-married couple, but to their whole family, to the persons who were present at the marriage ceremony, to those who helped to bring about the marriage and to those that dined or otherwise kept up social inter-course with them. Karsondas had an illiterate wife who was innocent of higher culture. After Karsondas was excom-

municated, throughout his life, his wife gave him a good deal of trouble and this became clear from the last letter that he wrote to his friend Sheth Sorabji Bengali. After Karsondas's death, the whole family would not have been admitted to the fold of the caste, but for the efforts of Sheth Dossabhai Karaka and Sheth Sorabji Bengali, who were influential citizens of Bombay and were on the best terms with rich Hindus and with the Mahajan Shet Gopaldas Madhavdas. The family was re-admitted after a year and a half, after they had paid fine and performed the 'Praysohit' ceremony at Nasik.

Karsondas was the great emancipator of the Gujarati women. Among his people, women were quite illiterate. He helped women to educate themselves. He translated in Gujarati, a well-thought out speech, on "Female Education" by Sir Bartle Frere, the then Governor of Bombay. During his time, people were marrying their children at very young age; and on account of this custom, many young women became widows and were obliged to lead a life of enforced widowhood. Karsondas opened the way for their re-marriage. He opened the eyes of Vaishnava women to the fact that they were not doing a meritorious and religious duty when they believed in and practised the offering of their persons for sexual congress with their spiritual guides, under the delusion that they were doing so with the god Shri Krishna. He told them further that doing so was an utterly degraded view of religion and a heinous sin. Karsondas hated indecent songs being sung by Hindu women at the time of marriages in their families and at the time of the visits of Maharajas at their places. By his writings, he succeeded in stopping this custom. He cherished very high notions regarding the duties of an

ideal woman should be. His picture of an ideal woman was as follows :

“ Look at the picture of a woman who delights the heart of a man and who overpowers him by her pure love. Observe her traits. She walks gently. She speaks only sweet, melodious words. She is both mild and guileless. She neither sits idly nor wanders here and there. She puts on neat and clean clothes. She neither eats or drinks like a glutton, but like a temperate woman. By her good and amiable disposition her smiling face is suffused with love. From her lips only kind and affectionate words come out as from good trees we get only fragrant flowers and sweet fruits. She carries out all her husband's wishes, and passes her time peacefully and happily. In all her work she uses her God-given intelligence and tries to remain honest and virtuous in all her deeds. Her heart is fully virtuous and the perennial spring of ardent love ever flows from it. ”

Karsondas held that “ The measure of the social state of a country is taken from the status of the women of that country ; in the scales of civilisation, that country cannot be weighed properly where women are not honoured ; the country where women are not honoured can never attain a position of greatness in the world. ” Karsondas honoured his countrywomen and wished women of position to shine out like their sisters of civilised countries. He said : “ Indian women of high class and rich ones should emulate the noble work of their English sisters who do day service of poor patients, who care for their fellow-beings in a way so as to save them from sufferings of hunger and experiences of unhappiness. ”

Karsondas did his utmost to improve his people in giving up unnecessary expensive marriage, pregnancy and death ceremonies; and this he did by carrying out in private what he preached.

Karsondas was in debt to his country for the privileges and for the rights which he already enjoyed. The three great pioneer reforms he introduced in his society were a sufficient testimony of the beautiful way in which he discharged that debt and of his good citizenship. Karsondas exercised his power with serenity and humility as a servant of his people—not in a servile spirit, but as an enlightened citizen.

The citizen of the future, like Karsondas, would certainly have to justify his existence by some form of work that tended to the general good—otherwise he would be held to forfeit the respect and the protection of the community to whose welfare his life contributed nothing.

#### KARSONDAS AS A SON.

Karsondas lost his mother in his infancy; and from his young age was not living with his father. The reason why he was living separate from his father is not known. It is very likely that the temperaments of both father and son were as poles asunder. Karsondas's father married a second time, and since then, Karsondas lived with the wife of her mother's paternal uncle: but even before that, Karsondas was now and then living with this aunt. After Karsondas was driven away by his aunt, he did not seek his father's shelter, nor did the father help him to tide over his difficulty. This showed that Karsondas, from his youth, was a man of very independent character. If his father had helped

him pecuniarily, there was no reason why Karsondas should have been obliged to give up studies. The certificate given to Karsondas by Professor John Harkness shows that the domestic difficulties alluded to in this letter were very likely want of funds and the disagreement with his father because of the early indication he gave of his tendency as a reformer. Karsondas's father was living when Karsondas won the victory in the Maharaja Libel Case. When this Case was pending, Karsondas's father used to visit his son at his place and told him that his activity as a reformer was not to be commended and advised his son, for the sake of the family reputation, to give up the company of reformers and to give up his work of reforms. Karsondas, like a dutiful son, mildly explained to his father how his activities were bound to improve both religion and morality, how they were sure to increase his reputation among enlightened people and how his philanthropic work was sure to give him happiness here and hereafter. Even after the judgment in the Libel Case, Karsondas's father was not glad to learn that his son had earned name and fame by the Case.

#### KARSONDAS AS A HUSBAND.

Karsondas married three times. Nowhere do we find sufficient direct information about Karsondas's relations with his wife; but at some places, Karsondas has revealed himself. Karsondas's views as regards a husband's duties towards his wife are given below :

"If she commits a mistake rebuke her gently. Don't coerce her to obey you. You have taken her hand in marriage and therefore remain chaste in your married life because she is the mother of your children. Whenever she is suffering from illness or from any

other trouble, comfort her with your kind, gentle and sweet words. While sharing in her troubles, you express your sorrow and look at her with eyes of affection, then her grief and anxiety and trouble will be greatly alleviated. "

Besides we have seen, how Karsondas from his young age was anxious to educate women; how he felt the degraded position to which women of his country were reduced and how he strove his utmost to improve their position. Karsondas cherished these views even before he went to England; and these were confirmed when he saw how English women were treated. Nowhere do we find incompatibility of temper between husband and wife before Karsondas's visit to England. It was only after Karsondas was excommunicated, and this social ban continued for some time that his wife began to be uneasy, and being not educated, instead of being an inspiration to her good husband, proved a thorn in his flesh and made his life somewhat dark and gloomy; but all the same, like a good husband, he put up with the vagaries of his wife and tolerated her idiosyncrasies. From the letter which Karsondas wrote to Sheth Bengali, a few days before his death, it appeared that his wife was always murmuring because Karsondas was leading an honest life and consequently had not amassed a great fortune and she was very much afraid that in the case of her husband's death, her pecuniary state would be too bad to maintain her children decently. I give below the following portion from his letter, dated 19th August 1871:

" When I was in Bombay last Madhavdas expressed his fear to say that if Mr. Mangaldas and others, who

him pecuniarily, there was no reason why Karsondas should have been obliged to give up studies. The certificate given to Karsondas by Professor John Harkness shows that the domestic difficulties alluded to in this letter were very likely want of funds and the disagreement with his father because of the early indication he gave of his tendency as a reformer. Karsondas's father was living when Karsondas won the victory in the Maharaja Libel Case. When this Case was pending, Karsondas's father used to visit his son at his place and told him that his activity as a reformer was not to be commended and advised his son, for the sake of the family reputation, to give up the company of reformers and to give up his work of reforms. Karsondas, like a dutiful son, mildly explained to his father how his activities were bound to improve both religion and morality, how they were sure to increase his reputation among enlightened people and how his philanthropic work was sure to give him happiness here and hereafter. Even after the judgment in the Libel Case, Karsondas's father was not glad to learn that his son had earned name and fame by the Case.

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" When I was in Bombay last Madhavdas expressed his fear to say that if Mr. Mangaldas and others, who



had deposit account with him were to withdraw their money from his firm without due notice, it would be hard to maintain his credit. I thereupon advanced him Rs. 4000 (four thousand) on a note of demand. In this transaction, Mrs. K. is yet in the dark and probably thinks that our money is in the National Bank ..... The money is quite safe but if any thing goes wrong with me on account of my present illness, my wife will say that I have played false with her. For all her social sufferings I have promised her that all my savings and income were for her and children. If she were to know at this moment that the money is with Madhavdas she would make herself and me most unhappy, and I wish to avoid this for the sake of us both." In Karsondas's letter from Limree, dated 3rd July, 1871, to Sheth Bengali occurred the following two sentences:—"Mrs. K. is little better in temper and in health; and the children are doing well. Kindly remember us all to your family." This showed that Mrs. Karsondas was having fits of temper and this was occasionally proving troublesome to Karsondas, because his wife had to suffer all the hardships of excommunication. In the letter from Limree, dated 19th August, 1871 Karsondas, a few days before his death, wrote to his friend Sheth Bengali: "I have every hope of recovery from illness, and you need not feel anxious about it. But should it please God to call me in His presence, I have no doubt, that you will take care of my family. The solution of their social difficulty, I leave in your hands and God will help you in it. You will consider me very weak in mind for thus addressing you, but you will make every allowance for these childlike natural feelings." This touching reference to his wife and the following mention

about Karsondas and his wife during the last few moments of conscious life before death in Dr. Pandurang Gopal's letter, dated 7th May 1877, to Karsondas's biographer, Mahipatram, shows that Karsondas's relations with his wife were not bad. The necessary portion above alluded to is: "Towards the evening of the same day, he found himself growing worse and thereupon called me to listen to certain directions he was about to give.....He then called his wife and casting an anxious look around her, bade her a lasting farewell. This closed the scene of his mental existence and he became delirious. The delirium lapsed into perfect unconsciousness towards midnight, and altho' his ebbing strength was kept up by means of stimulants, he breathed his last on the morning of the next day." At Limree, both during mornings and evenings, Karsondas, with his wife and children were sitting on a coloured bench in a beautiful grove of grapes. From Limree, in May, 1871, he sent to his friend Madhavdas Rugnathdas and his wife Bai Dhankore, his and his wife's photos. From all these, one can well believe that Karsondas's relations with his wife were not strained; but she being brought up in the orthodox circle, being ignorant and illiterate, and there being a world-wide difference of views between husband and wife, she had frequent outpourings of complaints. In short, she was not competent enough to realize fully how great her husband was.

#### KARSONDAS AS A FATHER.

Karsondas had by his third wife a daughter. She died after the Libel Case was over. Karsondas had a son by this wife and while Karsondas was in England, this

son died when he was only eight months old. Since then, Karsondas had four sons by this third wife. After Karsondas's death, within a short period, she gave birth to a daughter. All the four sons and the daughter survived Karsondas. Karsondas's ideas about a father's duties to his sons were as follows :—

Teach him to remain obedient to you and he will never do shameful deeds.

Teach him to be honest in worldly matters and he will surely reap the benefit of that teaching.

Teach him to be philanthropic and he will surely be beloved of his people.

Teach him to be temperate and abstemious and he will remain hale and hearty.

Teach him wisdom and he will surely prosper.

Teach him to act justly and honestly and the world will highly honour him.

Teach him to have a pure heart and he shall never have cause to repent.

Teach him to be industrious, and he will certainly amass wealth.

Teach him to do good to others and his mind undoubtedly will be enlarged.

Teach him to acquire learning and his life will truly turn out to be a useful one.

Teach him to know both religion and morality and without doubt, he will get happiness in the next world.

Whenever Karsondas was visiting Ahmedabad, he put up at his friend Mahipatram's house, and there entertained Mahipatram's son Ramanbhai by his sweet

disposition. Karsondas used to keep in his mouth a burning clove and this made the young child very much astonished. From this conduct we have reason to infer that Karsondas was a lover of children. Karsondas had brought about the first widow re-marriage of Madhavdas and Dhankore. Madhavdas was Karsondas's friend. He had, by his former wife, a daughter named Gomti who was nearly three years old when her mother died. When she attained a marriageable age, her father and step-mother became very anxious about her marriage. Karsondas wished his son to marry Gomti; so also Madhavdas wished the same; but this they intended to do after consulting the wishes of both the children; however, fate had willed otherwise. Before this could be brought about, Karsondas died and this dear wish of his remained unfulfilled.

#### KARSONDAS AS A FRIEND.

A man is known by the company he keeps. Friendship is rightly regarded by people as a test of a man's character. It is neither the silly, gushing demeanour that leads to a neglect of duties, nor is it the unsociability and indifference of the selfish. It is midway between these two extremes. It has a desire to be pleasant and a desire to please. We meet with many people of all classes, sects, beliefs, opinions; but among these there are some who stand to us in a different relation from the rest. We are intimate with them. Karsondas chose his friends thoughtfully, wisely and prayerfully, and remained faithful to them throughout his life; but such was not the case with his friends. Karsondas had the happy knack of choosing friends. True friendship is a product of virtue and righteousness. Like attracts like.

Karsondas was himself a noble soul and therefore true-  
 friendship was cemented between him and high and noble  
 souls like Sir Bartle Frere, Sheth Bengali, Dr. John  
 Wilson, Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji, Sheth Mathuradas  
 Lowji, Sheth Gokuldas Tejpal, Rao Saheb Vishwanath  
 Narayan Mandlik, Mr. Hormasji Dadabhai, Dr. Bhau  
 Daji, Mr. K. N. Kabraji, Rao Saheb Mahipatram Rupram,  
 Mr. Madhavdas Rughnathdas, Dr. Murray Mitchell,  
 Dr. Atmaram Pandurang and several others. Karsondas  
 showed his appreciation of the good he recognised and  
 esteemed in those whose friendship he desired and he soon  
 bound them to him by the unbreakable bonds of gratitude  
 and loyalty. Karsondas was admitted to the friendship  
 of men of honour, integrity, and principle, and people  
 came to believe in him. He wished that a good opinion  
 should be formed regarding him by others, and there-  
 fore he was specially careful as to the persons with  
 whom he associated closely and whom he admitted to his  
 intimate friendship. Harriet Beecher Stowe says:—  
 “Once in an age, God sends to some of us, a friend who  
 loves in us, not a false imagining an unreal character,  
 but looking all through all the rubbish of our imperfec-  
 tions, loves in us the divine ideal of our nature—loves,  
 not the man that we are, but the angel that we may be.  
 .....But these wonderful soul friends, to whom God  
 grants such perception, are the exceptions in life; yet  
 sometimes we are blessed with one who sees through us,  
 as Michael Angelo saw through a block of marble,  
 when he attacked it in a divine fervour, declaring that an  
 angel was imprisoned within it; and it is often the  
 resolute and delicate hand of such a friend that sets the  
 angel free.” Karsondas had such soul-friends in the  
 persons of Dr. John Wilson, Sir. Bartle Frere, Sheth

Lakhmidas Khimji, Mr. Mathuradas Lowji, Mr. K. N. Kabraji, Sheth Sorabji Bengali. Among Karsondas's circle of true friends were people of all communities. So far as the Baniya community was concerned, he had hardly more than two or three friends who stood by him till the last. In the Hindu community, he had a few staunch friends. Karsondas's few, genuine friends had a great influence in moulding his career. There was a subtle influence from his bosom friends which unconsciously he imbibed. This accounts for great similarity in the lives of Karsondas, his biographer Mahipatram and Sheth Sorabji Bengali. Mahipatram was Karsondas's staunch friend and admirer, and but for him, the Gujarati-reading public would have been deprived of a good Gujarati biography of Karsondas. The entire Gujarati community is eternally indebted to Mahipatram for the good service that he has rendered to the cause of reform and for perpetuating his late friend's good contribution in accelerating the pace of that reform by his humble but sincere efforts. Karsondas lamented that in India, there were very few friendships in which friends were willing to give up their lives even for the sake of friendship. Friendship with noble souls was recognised by Karsondas as the medicine and solace of life. In a letter written from Bombay on 21st March, 1871, by Sheth Bengali to Karsondas we find among other matters the following:—

My dear Karsondas,

.....I saw Mr. Dossabhoj Framji Karaka last week, and he asks me to congratulate you in his name regarding the good opinion which he says H. E. the Governor entertains regarding you. Dossabhoj had to call on the Governor, when the latter was very particular

in asking his opinion about yourself. Dossabhoj gave some account of your sufferings in connection with the Maharaj and caste matters and spoke in favour of your strict adherence to your excellent principles. The Governor said that he was pleased at Dossabhoj Framji confirming all that he had thought and known about yourself. Is there anything in the mind which brought you so prominently to the Governor's mind? I trust sincerely there may be something good in store for you. The Governor also said to Dossabhoj about your deciding a case which showed great firmness and impartiality.

My family is all well. I am sorry to hear of Mrs. K. being again in bad health. Pray remember us all to her and believe me,

Yours sincerely,

S. SHAPOORJEE.

To this letter Karsondas replied, among other matters as follows :

Limree, 29th March, 1871.

My dear Mr. SORABJI,

I am in receipt of your favour for which please accept my best thanks. The information respecting the good opinion of H. E. the Governor is indeed most encouraging and I look upon it as the result of a true sympathy of few sincere friends who have known my difficulties and given me every possible help to keep me on the right path. May I request you to communicate to Mr. Dossabhai my hearty thanks for speaking so favourably of me to His Excellency? It is an obligation that I shall never forget.....

Mrs. K. is little better and the children are doing well. Kindly remember us all to all your family.

Yours ever truly,

KARSONDAS MULJI.

P. S.

I enclose a printed copy of Addresses given me last year by the Durbar lady and Mahajans of Rajkote for your information. Though I do not deserve all that has been said, it would be a satisfaction to my friends to know that I have earned good opinion also of the people through God's blessings.)

KARSONDAS MULJI.

Rao Saheb Vishwanath N. Mandlik, an eminent citizen of Bombay, was Karsondas's friend. He recognised himself as a sepoy in the army and called Karsondas a Sardar. Regarding the reason why Karsondas was able to secure good friends he says: "If there was anything more than another which attracted to Mr. Karsondas's banner, a band of zealous and truth-seeking friends, whose united exertions contributed, under Providence, to the ultimate success of the undertaking, it was the simplicity and consistency of his character." When Jadunath Maharaj had come to Bombay, Karsondas's friend, the Gujerati poet Narmada-shanker committed an honest mistake of inviting the Maharaj to a public discussion on the subject, "Whether Hindu Shastras permit the re-marriage of Hindu widows?" The result of this discussion was that practically the whole of the Vaishnava fold became the deadliest enemy of reformers, whom it dubbed as athiests. Karsondas was a true friend; he did not always



speak ill of his friends even, when they were wrong. Witness his view of Narmadashanker's mistake, in the "Satya Prakash" of 18th November 1861, wherein among other matters, he said: "Of all the Maharajas who are known to us, Shri Jadunathji Maharaj has been found to be the most courageous and the most discriminating. Without regard to the unjust means, the said Maharaj has latterly adopted to injure us, we must say that by a public approval of female education, the Maharaj has rendered himself worthy of no little respect. Had not the poet Narmadashanker erred and had he not plunged him into the re-marriage controversy, we should this day have seen the Maharaj advancing instead of retiring from the field of reform. But often times, some slight incidents prove unfavourable. The same is the case now, and we are really sorry for it." Karsondas's trait of a true friend is seen again in the fact that in the first edition of 'Kutumb Mitra' he had dedicated that book to Sheth Mangaldas. Nathoobhai, but when the second edition was to be published, Karsondas, seeing that Sheth Mangaldas was not proving a true friend, removed the dedication from the second edition. In the first chapter I have already alluded to Madhavdas Rughnathdas's opinion of Karsondas as a true friend, but that opinion is again worth repeating here. When Madhavdas Rughnathdas and his wife Dhankore heard about Karsondas's death, the sentiments expressed by both of them are given below:

"There must be very few men of the type of Karsondas. He was of the stuff of those who do what they say. He was my true and intimate friend. In the matter of my re-marriage I had the good fortune of his help and

courage. His advice and companionship both were very valuable to me. There was no limit to our sorrow on hearing the sad news of Karsondas's death. In all our difficulties, the patient Karsondas always helped us. His friendship and advice were invaluable. On seeing such a good and faithful friend to be on our side, we were so much emboldened and encouraged that we were quite able to withstand with bravery and force all the onslaughts of our enemies, and cared little for their attacks. One can imagine the irreparable loss sustained by us by losing such a great helper. We were courageous because of the courage of Karsondas. What we shall do in the absence of such help? How shall we face the continuous attacks of our enemies without the presence of Karsondas? The instant I heard the sad news of his demise, I became nearly unconscious. I lost all courage. My dear wife Dhankore cried piteously. Our great prop, our right hand—all our hopes and aspirations vanished with the passing away of Karsondas. In this way, our loss was not insignificant; our grief knew no bounds." This excellent testimony speaks for itself. The re-married couple, in their difficulties, were helped by Karsondas with a loan of Rs. 4,000. Karsondas kept the photos of his friends as reminders of his duties towards them. His friendship with Parsi and European friends came to his rescue in the troublous times of the Share mania, when but for the help of these friends, it would have become extremely difficult for Karsondas to have come out safely. At this juncture, his so-called Hindu friends, instead of helping him, proved very harassing. Both at Rajkote and at Limree, his circle of friends daily increased; and while his friends came to see him there he always conversed with them, on

speak ill of his friends even, when they were wrong. Witness his view of Narmadashanker's mistake, in the "Satya Prakash" of 18th November 1861, wherein among other matters, he said: "Of all the Maharajas who are known to us, Shri Jadunathji Maharaj has been found to be the most courageous and the most discriminating. Without regard to the unjust means, the said Maharaj has latterly adopted to injure us, we must say that by public approval of female education, the Maharaj has rendered himself worthy of no little respect. Had not the poet Narmadashanker erred and had he not plunged him into the re-marriage controversy, we should this day have seen the Maharaj advancing instead of retiring from the field of reform. But often times, some slight incidents prove unfavourable. The same is the case now, and we are really sorry for it." Karsondas's traits of a true friend is seen again in the fact that in the first edition of "Kutumb Mitra" he had dedicated that book to Sheth Mangaldas Nathooobhai, but when the second edition was to be published, Karsondas seeing that Sheth Mangaldas was not proving a true friend, removed the dedication from the second edition. In the first chapter I have already alluded to Madhavdas Rughnathdas's opinion of Karsondas as a true friend, but that opinion is again worth repeating here. When Madhavdas Rughnathdas and his wife Dhankore heard about Karsondas's death the sentiments expressed by both of them are given below:

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useful topics and influenced them by giving suitable advice. It was because of his good and amiable disposition and his close friendship with many people that at Rajkote and at Limree, unasked, the Shrivak and Maishri Baniyas kept free social intercourse with him and his family. At Limree, he was on very friendly terms with the Thakore Saheb. A few hours before he became unconscious, prior to his death, through his medical adviser, Dr. Pandurang Gopal, he conveyed his last respects to all his friends and desired God's grace on them all.

#### KARSONDAS AS A STUDENT,

What kind of character Karsondas bore while a student, appears from the following certificate given by Varjiwandas Madhavdas :

Bombay, 23rd April, 1855.

I have much pleasure in certifying that Karsondas Moolji is a third year's free student in the Elphinstone College. I have found him honest, industrious and painstaking young man. He has been in contact with me from his infancy and always I observed him to be of moderate habits and good disposition.

VARJEEVANDAS MADHOWDAS.

What kind of a student Karsondas was in his early life is learnt from the following certificate :—

Elphinstone Institution,

Bombay, 23rd April, 1855.

I hereby certify that I have known Karsondas Mulji for several years, first as a pupil in the English School, then as a Vernacular Teacher, and latterly as a Student in the College Department. He possesses

fair abilities but has unfortunately been prevented by domestic circumstances for making such progress in his studies as he otherwise might have done. He has been diligent and obedient and his conduct so far as I know has been uniformly correct.

JOHN HARKNESS,  
Principal.

The clear indication of a studious habit of mind noticed in these certificates was preserved by Karsondas throughout his life. The first indication of this, we have had, was his attempt to write a paper on the re-marriage of Hindu widows while he was a mere student in his college. The very fact that the young student tried to compete for an essay for which a good prize of Rs. 150 was fixed and that Karsondas should compete for an essay on a subject of advanced social views are worth noticing. They show that before the date of the announcement of this prize competition, Karsondas was not confining his attention to the subjects taught in the College, but that he was a student who devoted his attention to social subjects, and among them on subjects which during his times were not popular, with a view to be of benefit to his people in after life. Karsondas recognised the time of youth to be one of the precious opportunities of his life—rich in blessing if one chose to make it so, but having in it, the materials of undying remorse, if one suffered it to pass unimproved. He did not pass the precious time of youth in enjoying himself, and in passing his days idly and uselessly. He deeply thought and well-prepared himself to meet the business and difficulties of life. He diligently utilized the period of his youth and prepared himself for whatever came to him in sterner years. He knew that the lessons of youth must be learnt only in

youth and that this could not be learnt in the next period of life. In other words, in the bright sunny days of youth, he gathered into his life, stores of intellectual and spiritual strength from which to draw, when he went forth to encounter the world's fierce temptations. He had acquired as much knowledge as a present matric student. During Karsondas's time, this much knowledge was requisite for passing the Vakil's examination; but the kind of school and college education of that period was so sound, that it developed and trained him, so that wherever he was placed, he was sure to master his circumstances and deal with the facts of life as to build up in himself a noble manhood and be of service to those about him. Karsondas had received real education. Further through his study, he so trained his conscience that it did its duty in the sorest stress without wavering; he so wrought his habits into his conduct that nothing could change it; he fixed the principles in his heart so firmly that nothing could ever swerve his life from them. In short, in the ship of his life, through character, he piled massive strength which nothing could possibly overcome. In this preparation, he presents to the young men of India a memorable example as to their duties in young life. What India wants is young Karsondases who will amass golden thoughts, golden wisdom, golden deeds, not mere golden coins: young men who prefer to have "thought-capital, character-capital to cash-capital."

We will now see how in practice this diligent preparation proved useful to Karsondas. Karsondas was an ordinary member of the Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha. He was now and then contributing articles on social subjects to the "Rast Goftar"; but his ardent, ambitious, idealistic spirit was not satisfied with this

kind of spasmodic method of doing good to the people. The diseases of the social polity of India were too deep-seated to produce any tangible effect by these feeble efforts of his. He determined to take more active steps to remedy them. He enquired about the different subjects of the lectures delivered before the Sabha, and found that the subject of the advantages of Foreign Travel was not touched at all. He studied this important subject from all its aspects and wrote out a good paper on the subject. He read this paper in a spirited style before an influential audience; and since that time, he became a marked man, in the Bombay Hindu society. Unlike other students, who cease to continue their studies after finishing their regular studies in schools and colleges, Karsondas continued his studies throughout his life. He had from his young age acquired the habit of study. He never allowed his time to be uselessly spent in gossip or useless pursuits. His leisure time, both at home and while discharging the duties of his service, was well utilized. He continued learning as if he was to live for ever and this noble trait of his so enriched his mind that his speeches, his writings and his books were all full of information presented in such an entertaining manner as to find easy acceptance in the minds of the readers. As a student, Karsondas had cultivated the important habit of earnestly scrutinising all that was within the range of his vision. He looked at everything so as really to see it. This enabled him to shine out as a pioneer public worker who discovered new pathways or invented new methods. He had also cultivated the analytical faculty which enabled him to consider every thing in its separate parts, to trace effects to their cause, to determine the source of facts.



It was his faculty of analysis or observing all the details in connection with a subject, which helped him to become ready with expedients and resourceful in suggestion. The cultivation of these two important faculties of his character helped him to write books and articles in papers and periodicals depicting in true colours the actual social and religious life of the people of his community. His books are pronounced to be the true mirrors of his times. The first time he went to England, he minutely observed the state of English society, analysed the causes which made England a forward and civilised country, compared the state of his people with the English and detected the flaws of Indian character and the merits in English character and prepared a bulky volume giving a history of his travels in his mother tongue. This first work of its kind showed how deep a student Karsondas was. At every page of this work, one meets with useful suggestions for his people. While in England, at great pains, he wrote out an excellent book called "The Sect of the Maharajas". A perusal of it will reveal to us the fact of Karsondas's deep study and research. Karsondas had to go a second time to England on a political mission. He had the happy habit of doing everything in a thorough-going manner. He therefore toured throughout Kathiawar to gather correct information pertaining to his mission in England, stayed for full one month at Rajkote and after personal enquiries from State officers, thoroughly prepared himself to present his case in England to the best of his power. He went to England thoroughly prepared. There, his studious and industrious habits again impelled him to collect materials for a second book of Travels, but before he could write this book he died, and thus his countrymen were deprived of the knowledge that he had

so laboriously gathered during his stay in England. In Court, during recess hour, and at home, he was found either writing, or reading books or arranging books of his library. He attached great value to public libraries in the education of the general mass of people and he gave great encouragement to libraries. Just as he furnished a good example to young students as to how they should prepare themselves for old age, so he presented a living instance to all persons and specially to high officers in Native States, that the habit of study should never be given up, and that if one willed, however busy he might be, he could find time to snatch at least a few minutes daily, for perusal of good and useful books, and that every one should use his powers of self-education, by taking the trouble to grasp the means which came within his reach. He showed by his life that just as our body required food for bodily nourishment, similarly our mind required mental food for its own nourishment also.

#### KARSONDAS AS A TEACHER.

Karsondas after he was ordered to leave his aunt's shelter got an appointment as a teacher in the Gokuldas Tejpal Seminary at Mandvi. We have seen how at the very start, he was able to show his mark. Not only the pupils felt satisfied, but the co-teachers of the school and the authorities all felt satisfied at Karsondas's work as a teacher. What was the secret of his success in this new line? In the first place, Karsondas had love and sympathy with the children in order to be able effectively to guide their efforts and exertions in the right way. This was Karsondas's primary qualification. Besides, he had the power of communicating knowledge

in a clear and attractive manner. He had earnestness and enthusiasm for his profession and did not regard his duties as mere drudgery as a mercenary-minded teacher would do. He had the ability to inspire his pupils with a love for their studies, and for everything that was good and noble. Karsondas's work showed that besides knowledge, he had all the other qualifications absolutely essential in the noble profession of a teacher. He fully realised that the aim of education was to increase the usefulness of every intellectual child by making him fit to help himself and to increase his happiness by enabling him to see clearly and also to will to do whatever was best for the welfare of himself and others. Karsondas's personality as a teacher produced unconsciously the good influence of making the other teachers in the school more enthusiastic in their work. James Martineau has correctly gauged the very great importance of the work of a teacher. He says: "In the task of instruction, so lightly assumed so unworthily assumed, no amount of wisdom would be superfluous and lost; and even a child's elementary teaching would be best conducted, were it possible, by Omniscience itself." Karsondas did not teach his pupils anything of which he was not sure, because he believed in the principle enunciated by Ruskin that it was better that a child should be ignorant of a thousand truths than have consecrated in its heart a single lie. He gave life to the daily lessons and drew out the natural powers of the mind, while storing it with a certain amount of useful knowledge. It is said that there is no teaching until the pupil is brought into the same state or principle in which the teacher is. For true teaching such a transfusion should take place as to make the

teacher the pupil, and the pupil the teacher. Such kind of teaching was given by Karsondas and the benefit was that what he taught the pupils was never lost by any unfriendly criticism or bad company.

The work of Karsondas as a teacher in the Gokuldas Tejpal Seminary was his apprenticeship for qualifying himself not as a teacher of young pupils, but as a general instructor of the people of his great community. His work as a teacher at the Mandvi school satisfied Mr. T. C. Hope, the head of the Government Educational Department. His work satisfied Sheth Gokuldas Tejpal and through him, Sheth Mathuradas Lowji, who in later life became the greatest supporter of Karsondas in the Libel Case. His work satisfied the parents of the Khoja pupils of the school to such an extent that the Khoja reformers became Karsondas's life-long friends and admirers. In his after life, through the Buddhivardhak Hindu Sabha, through his writings for the press, through his speeches, he showed that he was well-fitted for the mission of enlightening his generation, both because he had prepared himself for this post by deep study and by cultivating his character so that whatever he taught, when his readers and hearers came to know that his teaching perfectly accorded with his private life and character, they revered it and believed it to be worth practising. Karsondas's work as a teacher, in the largest sense of the term, will ever live for the benefit of his countrymen. Karsondas was a righteous man and he taught by his example. He was a cultured gentleman who knew how to wield his pen effectively. He combined in himself the qualities of a useful preacher and an inspiring writer. The education that Karsondas gave to his pupils both by his tongue and

pen was a thing of infinite usury. It increased people's knowledge, and intelligence and touched his and future generations with new impetus, adding to the sum-total of his community's fitness for efficiency.

#### KARSONDAS AS AN ADMINISTRATOR.

In 1867, the Raja of Rajkote died, leaving a minor behind; the Government of Bombay appointed Karsondas, on 20th December 1867, to take up the management of the State as Deputy Superintendent, with the Political Agent of Kathiawar as his superior. He worked at the post for nearly two and a half years. Karsondas had received sufficient education of the right type, and had, after he had left College, got self-education by continuous study during leisure hours. Further, during his travels in England, he had seen with his eyes, the able manner in which British administration was conducted; and this foreign travel had considerably broadened his views. He had shown in different walks of life his ability and was known as a man of irreproachable character. He had the good of the people at heart. All these qualifications proved very valuable to him in ably administering the Native State of Rajkote. We have given in a previous chapter important extracts from the Address presented by the leading citizens of Rajkote showing what good was done by Karsondas to the people. I now give below the Address of Rajkote Durbar Lady, in full, to show that the rulers themselves were satisfied with Karsondas's management.

#### THE ADDRESS.

To Sjt. Bhai Karsondas Mulji.

The Address that I desire to give to you is perhaps the first of its kind among the Native States. It is

couched in ordinary language, yet considering it to be the outward expression of our inward satisfaction, I trust you will accept the same.

In December, 1861, when Government appointed you to our State, there was no acquaintance between yourself and ourselves except that we knew each other's names; but as your post had much to do with me, as time passed, my heart felt such a kind of satisfaction by your virtuous qualities, that there arose between us a new relationship of brotherhood.

Now that you are transferred to a higher post at the Limree State, a post of greater honour and one which is beneficial to your interests, I am pleased; but the fact of your leaving our State causes grief in my mind, and I cannot on this occasion resist the temptation of expressing a few words of my appreciation of your goodness.

You have discharged the duties of your post with ability and honesty in a way which has not only increased the welfare and prosperity of our State, but at the same time satisfied the people by your dispensing impartial justice and by the cordial relations you have established with them. Further, while discharging your duties conscientiously, you have done voluntary service by personally supervising the education of our Prince Shri Bawaji Raj. In regard to the status and position of our State, you have sowed seeds of good manners, modesty, wisdom, intelligence, love and affection. All this is promising and satisfactory. These are the chief reasons of our gladness on this occasion.

We have, till now, never had any opportunity of expressing publicly, our entire satisfaction at your work.

Therefore we close this Address by giving you our good blessings, that just as you have done your duty honestly both towards our State and our subjects, similarly may you give such satisfaction wherever you go and may you still rise in future to higher posts and may God keep you and your whole family always happy!

10th May, 1870.

BAI SHRI NANIBA-

It is very rare to find an Administrator able to please both the rulers and the ruled; but in Karsondas's case, it must be said to his credit, that he gave entire satisfaction to both the parties. Further, he, by his able administration, falsified Government Officers' view that only Munsifs or Mamlatdars who might have served in the Judicial, Revenue or Political Department under the British Government, would prove to be efficient administrators. Karsondas had got the experience in different walks of life, as a teacher, as an editor of a newspaper, as an author; and the Thakore Saheb of Rajkote being a minor, Karsondas had all the scope to try smoothly the experiment of introducing all kinds of reform, without any hitch whatsoever. Karsondas's intelligence, his cultured mind and his character as an upright and just man enabled him to rule the State with great distinction.

In Native States, administrators of old views become popular with the rulers because they harass ryots, merchants and the general public by levying all sorts of unjust taxes on them and by giving partial justice after accepting bribes. The money so obtained goes for the private benefit of the rulers and not for the advantage of the people. Further, new administrators

harass people by increasing the revenue of the State by unfair means, by confiscating people's lands, and by assessing the land-tax at an exorbitant rate. In these and other ways, the Administrators of a selfish type become, by these unjust means, favourites with the rulers. Karsondas changed all this. He by his calm, quiet, and amiable disposition dispensed impartial justice. We have seen above how the Governor of Bombay gave a certificate about this to Sheth Dossabhoj Karaka. Sheth Bengali in his letter to Karsondas about this wrote as follows: "The Governor also said to Dossabhoj about your deciding a case which showed great firmness and impartiality." Karsondas prepared the State Budget with great care. He not only discharged his duties ably and faithfully as an Administrator, but as a citizen he took pride in his city, tried to beautify it by means of good houses for people to live in, good roads, good schools, post offices, markets, charitable institutions, etc., in fact, all good works which tend to the health and happiness of his people. On 27th April, 1870, he handed over the charge of Rajkote and went to Limree. There he had the higher post of a Special Assistant to the Political Agent in Kathiawar on a monthly salary of Rs. 500. Here he was able to rule the State for a year only, because he soon died; but during that short period, he introduced many reforms, dispensed impartial justice and became a favourite with both the rulers and the ruled. At Limree, Karsondas had become a great friend of the Thakore Sahab. At Limree too, as an administrator, he became so popular that the Shrivak and Meishri Baniyas of Limree had resolved to have free social intercourse with Karsondas and his family, and that too without any request on Karsondas's part at all.



On 29th August 1871, Karsondas died at Limree and his funeral procession was attended by nearly three thousand people of all communities, and till now people of Limree remember Karsondas's name with great gratitude. Mr. W. W. Anderson, the Political Agent, on the same day, issued the following Notification :

"It is with deep regret the Political Agent has received telegraphic announcement of the death, this morning, at 9 A. M., of Mr. Kursondas Moolji, Special Assistant in charge, Limree.

The able and conscientious manner in which this excellent Officer discharged the duties with which he has been entrusted since his arrival in this province, had gained for him the approval of his superiors. His amiable qualities in private life, and the esteem and regard in which he was held by all classes of the Native community in Kattyawar, will long endear his memory amongst them.

His work as a Reformer is well-known. The Government has lost in him a zealous officer, and the Political Agent, in common with his numerous friends, laments his untimely loss.

As a token of respect to his memory, the Political Agent directs all offices be closed this day."

On 7th September, 1871, Mr. W. W. Wedderburn, Acting Secretary to Government, issued from the Bombay Castle, the following Notification :

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT,

"His Excellency the Governor in Council has received with much regret the news of the death, on the

28th ultimo, of Mr. Kursondas Mooljee, Special Assistant to the Political Agent in Kattyawar, in charge of the Limree State.

As a public servant, Mr. Kursondas Mooljee has always merited the approval of Government; and in his private capacity he has earnestly striven to promote liberal and enlightened views among his countrymen."

This honour, given by order of the Right Honourable the Governor in Council was for the first time bestowed on a deceased Indian.

In his career as an Administrator both at Rajkote and at Limree, if Karsondas had not the good of the people at heart, but the sole idea of enriching himself, he could have easily done so. Karsondas was a poor man, and yet he withstood all the great temptations that were in his way, simply because his object was to do the greatest good to his people. Karsondas was not at all elated at the high positions he had secured. At all steps, he consulted every one. He had despatch in his work, and in each and every work of his, he showed his tact, ability and honesty. In all places, besides the duties of an Administrator, he mixed freely with all people. He took an active part in the civic life of both cities and helped in all possible ways, the residents. Karsondas's personality and his training were of a such a type that, in whichever walk of life he was placed, he would have shone out.

Karsondas considered Raja Ram Mohan Roy as the first Indian reformer. When one studied the life of this great reformer and compared it with the life of Karsondas given here, he would at once notice great similarity. Karsondas held Raja Ram Mohan Roy as his ideal of

a reformer; and we see from Karsondas's life that he mostly followed this great reformer. Mr. K. N. Kabraji, the great Parsi journalist and social reformer and a true and sincere friend of Karsondas's, rightly called Karsondas as the second Ram Mohan Roy. It was mostly the example of Ram Mohan Roy who braved all the obloquy of his people who attributed bad motives to him, that inspired Karsondas to brave the odium of the members of his Kapole Baniya community by undertaking foreign travel. There is also a great similarity in the lives of Sheth Sorabji Shapurji Bengali and Rao Saheb Mahipatram Rupram and that of Karsondas. Both these gentlemen, as we have seen, were Karsondas' staunchest friends, and the latter, besides being a friend, had the goodness to write Karsondas's biography in Gujarati, in the year 1877. I shall content myself by giving here under three distinct headings, incidents and traits of the above-named three lives which tally with the traits of Karsondas and with the incidents of his life.

#### RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY.

The Raja's motto was to do the greatest good to mankind. This ideal the Raja always kept before him. He was kind and loving to his own people. He was plain and simple in his habits. He was a man with a large heart. He was a man of great courage. In public and private life he bore a high character. He was a great moral teacher of life and religion. He had always felt that in India of his day, the ancient ideal of God had been hidden by later customs and ideas. He therefore tried to take away what was bad in his religion. Later in life he was inclined to agree with his father in the harmlessness of idol worship. He strongly attacked,

in his pamphlets, both Hindu and Christian orthodoxy. He believed that with our worship must go a life of goodness and morality. He bitterly attacked superstition and priestcraft. I give below two quotations which show the comparative value of Christianity with other religions :—

“The result of my search into religious truth has been that I have found the teaching of Christ more suited to the use of moral beings than any I have known before.”  
 “In every nation, he that fearest God and doeth good is accepted by Him in any form of worship, still I think that Christianity, if properly taught, can better improve the moral, social and political state of mankind than any other religion.” The Raja never became a Christian. It was the morality of Christian teaching that he loved.

The Raja was a noted social reformer. He did his best to help the cause of Indian women. He tried to advance women's education. He was against the system of Sati and polygamy. He warred against caste. He was for widow-remarriage. The Raja was a writer too. He wrote many beautiful works in his own mother-tongue, Bengali. He was greatly in favour of British rule. He believed that its advantages outweighed its disadvantages, and that it would lead to the salvation of India. He believed that alone by education, sound and suited for practical action, a nation could rise high. He was a bridge between the East and the West. He desired the active life of the West to be joined with the meditative life of the East. He was a lover of freedom. He was of opinion that the happiness of a people depended upon the liberty of thought and action. Against the rules of his caste, he braved the risks of foreign travel.

### SHETH SORABJI SHAPURJI BENGALI.

Sheth Bengali was born on 15th February, 1831. He was a man of sweet and amiable disposition. He dispensed his charity secretly. He loved the poor people. He was a man of firm determination and led an unselfish life for the good of his people. In spite of his busy life, he found time to read and write. This taste he had from his young age and it lasted till his death. His evenings were not spent in idle gossip or in attending social functions, but in studying important problems of the day. He was against litigation, and advised all people who came in contact with him to settle their disputes amicably. His life of service and sacrifice was for the good of all, irrespective of caste and creed. He was on intimate friendly relations with Hindus. People of all communities reposed confidence in him. He believed in perpetuating the memory of Indian worthies and he always took great trouble in raising funds for the purpose. He hated speculation. He was a capable journalist and writer. He wrote on social, religious, educational and commercial subjects. As he had received true education, it enabled him to edit ably, well-known papers like the 'Rast Goftar' and the 'Bombay Samachar'. He was a true friend and champion of Indian women. He did his best to raise their status in society. He founded a girls' school in commemoration of his mother. He helped in starting lying-in homes, sanitariums for women, medical relief for poor Indian women and in various other ways. He was a social reformer, and as such, did his best for introducing reforms both in the Parsi and the Hindu communities. He was in favour of Hindu widow re-marriage movement. His social conscience was well-developed and hence he turned

out to be an excellent citizen. His great services both for his community and country were unique. In 1863, he travelled in Europe. He was a Justice of the Peace and a Fellow of the Bombay University.

### RAO SAHEB MAHIPATRAM RUPRAM.

Mahipatram and Karsondas were of the same age. Mahipatram had the misfortune of losing his mother in young age. On account of his poor state, he was obliged to give up studies at an early age and to take up service as a teacher. He was also a social reformer, and when he was living in Bombay, used to take part in social reform movements. He was a member of the 'Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha' and was its secretary, in the year 1856. In 1856-57, as a journalist, during Karsondas's absence from Bombay, he edited ably the 'Satya Prakash'. He was also a writer and has written several books, two of which are the biographies of Mehtaji Durgaram Muncharam and Karsondas Mulji. He was a self-made man and by his self-reliance and self-efforts he rose from an ordinary man to the high post of a Deputy Educational Inspector. From among the educated Indians, he was the first Gujarati Brahmin to travel to England against the wishes of his caste, in the year 1860. When he returned to India he was much persecuted by his caste people.

The traits and incidents of the lives of the above-named three persons showed that their lives greatly moulded Karsondas's life and career.

We have now thoroughly seen all the aspects of Karsondas's life from his birth down till his death— a period of 37 years, and we have seen that he took

up the life as was given to him by his Maker and did his best to make it great and good so as to make it fit to give back the same to God who gave it to him. We do not know much of the first 20 years of his life, but the period of his life from 1853 to 1871 (eighteen years) is full of memorable events. In this too short a period, Karsondas made his life as honest as possible, and calmly did his duty in the present, as the hour and the act required, and did not too curiously consider the future beyond him. He stood erect, believing that God was just and made his passage through this life no dishonour to the power that placed him there. Dr. Vinet says: "He who has no individual life does not really live, and only appears to our deluded eyes the simulacrum of a human being." We have already seen how Karsondas lived a life full of individuality. He had no stimulus from any visible reward; his life passed while the object for which he toiled was still too far away to comfort him. He held aloof from dazzling schemes and earned the misunderstanding of the crowd, because he foresaw remote issues. He really lived like a man, his heart beat in unison with the great heart of humanity; he wept for his people's pains and suffered for their sins, and tasted the fulness of unselfish love. When we see how he had few favourable circumstances to help him and many unfavourable, then alone we can justly estimate the value of his life work. When Karsondas was driven away from his aunt's home and was a shelterless young man, the first rich person who helped him was Seth Gokuldas Tejpal of blessed memory. He appointed him to be a teacher in his vernacular school at Mandvi and made his position easy so far as bare maintenance was concerned. Then it was Seth Mangal

das Nathoobhai, who seeing in young Karsondas, signs of future greatness, consented to bear for sometime the financial responsibility of the new paper that Karsondas desired to start. This promised help, if it had not come, would have nipped in the bud the high aspirations of Karsondas, then there would not have been any "Satya Prakash," there would not have been any thorough exposure of the immoralities of the Vaishnava Maharajas, and Karsondas would throughout his life have remained an unknown teacher of an ordinary school. Further, but for the great help in all possible directions, by worthies like Dr. John Wilson, Sheth Lakhmidas Khimji and Sheth Mathuradas Lowji, it is doubtful how far Karsondas would have succeeded in thoroughly proving the plea of justification in the Maharaja Libel Case. After this case was over, Karsondas unfortunately succumbed to the temptation of the share mania that was so largely raging in Bombay in the year 1864, and suffered heavily. At this critical period in his life, his Parsi and European friends, like friends indeed, stood by him and rescued him from all troubles. Besides, it was the tempting offer of Sheth Karsondas Madhavdas and his bold promise to stand by Karsondas Mulji in the likely persecution by his Kapole caste after his return from England that the latter was able to go to England and stay there even for a few months. But for this visit, there would not have been the beautiful account of his travels in his published book, nor there would have been the published monumental work of his, viz: "The Sect of the Maharajas" nor the broadening effect on his mind which stood him in good stead in manfully bearing all future sufferings and which made him bold enough in after life to bring about the first



widow re-marriage in his Kapole community. Again it was the nobility of a few individual good friends like Sheth Premabhai Hemabhai, Sheth Virchand Deepchund, Sheth Karsondas Madhavdas, Mr. Pranjiwandas Waghji, Kavi Dalpatram Dahyabhai, and the Shrawak and the Meishri Baniyas of Rajkote and Limree that softened to a very great extent the hard life that Karsondas and his family had to lead owing to the sentence of excommunication that was pronounced against him and his family not only by his own caste but by the whole Mahajan.

Now let us cast a cursory glance at the odds that were against Karsondas. He was a poor, young man, without having had the benefit of full college education, having no home of his own and he, incurring the wrath of his father and surrounded by thousands and thousands of ignorant and superstitious votaries of the Vaishnava Maharajas had the boldness, in spite of his having been born and bred in that faith, of throwing out a public challenge to the Maharajas, virtually saying that if they did not improve in their licentious conduct, he would thoroughly expose them to an extent that would ultimately bring about their utter downfall and this too in the midst of about two hundred men of reformed views, out of whom there were hardly a dozen men of sterling merit who would openly help Karsondas in his righteous crusade. Karsondas had to carry on his campaign in his paper, at the risk of his life, when honest journalism was a rare thing. All this boldness and contemptuously declining all enticing temptations resulted in his and his family's life-long excommunication, a penalty of an extreme nature, which daily acted as gall and wormwood to his wife and which continually

preyed upon the mind of Karsondas who was naturally a man of an emotional sensibility.

Under these overwhelming odds, unlike those who conform to the general prejudices of society and who deviate as little as possible from the public opinion of the age in which they live, Karsondas searched out the abuses of his society and published them to the world. He loved truth for its own sake and paid a very heavy penalty for being true by his suffering in worldly prospects.

Several of the social and religious reforms which Karsondas preached were far in advance of his age. They were promulgated to an ignorant orthodox community which was deeply steeped in superstitious customs. The society of his time was not sufficiently advanced to receive the truths which he communicated. The very people for whose benefit he was preaching, on account of their mental slavery, utterly failed to appreciate the worth of his great social service.

Karsondas had a delicate constitution. While he was at Deesa, his poor health forced him to return to Bombay in a few months. He went to England twice, but again his health prevented his staying there for the full period of two years. He had lung trouble and besides suffered from chronic piles. In spite of these bodily troubles, he never shirked his duty. He considered the whole of religion and morality to be summed up in the love of God and the love of humanity; he held himself to that view and in that faith, launched his whole career upon it. The place allotted to him

by Providence was considered by him to be the best of honour and duty. His true life and blessedness consisted in living that highest life for which he was created and endowed. God estimates a man not by the position in which he is, but by the way in which he fills it.

Karsondas believed deeply and intensely. He had moral enthusiasm and this helped him to move people. He spoke and wrote with great effect. His speeches and writings were saturated with his own convictions; hence his words minted in the deep places of his mind and heart burned, carried conviction, awakened enthusiasm and stirred people's souls. His words had the thrill of certitude behind them and in them, and they failed not in their mission. Inspired by an unfaltering faith, he marched forward not caring for what the world would think, counted not his life dear unto himself, but accounting it an honour to suffer in the cause that was dear to his heart. Just as a stone thrown into a pond produces its influence to the farthest limits to which the water extended so was the influence of Karsondas's words and actions carried beyond the narrow circle of his life, to the farthest bounds of the great ocean of time. Karsondas was a happy man who so lived that death at all times might find him at leisure to die. He was one of the few people in his age and generation who stood on higher ground and looked at life from a truer standpoint. In service and sacrifice he found out the true meaning of life and also the secret of the true pleasure of life.

There cannot be any better estimate of Karsondas's great and good life than the impression that he has left and the changes he wrought upon his age. The mission which God had appointed him to fulfill had a

glory in His eyes which equalled that of the greatest and the best.

Karsondas mastered the fine art of living. By means of this art of turning the means of living to the best account, he extracted from life its highest enjoyment and through it reached its highest result. He exemplified this art in his actual life. He so lived in the world that he was sure to be missed when he left it. His whole life was a good living book and was a living example of what he taught. He grasped his opportunities. In his life, crises occurred when he had to make a momentous choice between pleasure and duty, between worldly life and heavenly hope, between the love of self extended into forgetfulness of God, and the love of God victorious in the forgetfulness of self, between something which was near and seemed sweet, but which in his heart of hearts he knew to be fatal and ruinous, and something which was far off and hard, but which in his inmost heart he acknowledged to be noble and divine. At such turning-points of his life, his great principles supported him in the performance of his duties and stimulated him to the resistance of temptations. He stood so well against the searching and subtle temptations of success, that he was never elated but kept his moral fibre free, his head clear, his heart warm, and his tastes simple.

In great men we find inconsistencies in their lives. Sir Isaac Newton defended the literal inspiration of the Scriptures, and was a consistent member of the Church of England. Blackstone, the great legal commentator, believed in witchcraft, and bolstered his belief by citing the Scripture text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live". Sir Matthew Hale, Chief Justice of

England, did the same. Gladstone was a great statesman and yet he believed in the Mosaic account of Creation, just as did Mary Baker Eddy. Washington was a rebel from political slavery, but lived and died a worthy Churchman, subsisting on canned theology. Franklin and Jefferson were rebels from both political and theological despotism, but looked leniently on leeches and apothecaries. Herbert Spencer had a free mind as regards religion, politics, economics and sociology. but he was a bachelor, lived in London, belonged to a club, played billiards, smoked much, and with all his vast knowledge never knew why physical health was out of his reach. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the father of social reform movement in India, was against polygamy and caste; and yet till the year 1824 had two wives, and he was rather careful about his own caste and could not boldly give up unreasoning custom. All through history, we find violence and gentleness, ignorance and wisdom, folly and shrewdness, side by side in the same person. This kind of inconsistency was not to be found in Karsondas. He lived a true and simple life, true to himself and true to its Maker. It is said that the world's interests were under God, in the hands of the young and that almost everything that was great had been done by young men. This proved true in Karsondas's life. A noble work like that of Karsondas was like the seed which was not quickened except it died. Karsondas was a pioneer reformer, a lover of liberty, a fighter of freedom, a hater of shams, and above all, an emancipator of Indian women. He faithfully fulfilled the duties of his station, used to the utmost the gift of his ministry, bore chafing annoyances, trivial irritations, as martyrs bore the pillory and the stake. Every advance in human knowledge, every invention, every

achievement, almost without exception, throughout the history of humanity, has been gained by those who had abandoned the idea of profit for themselves, and who were contented to labour for the profit of mankind. Karsondas considered the ideal to be proper for society, and in the society of his times, he proved himself to be its great Sannyasi. Karsondas's goodness and greatness not only saved his individual soul but in their influence they acted as great agents in the social progress of his country. Karsondas was the inspired preacher, the great teacher, nay, the mother of his people, whose words were the strivings of his own soul and whose teaching was but the testimony of his own pure heart. James Martineau says: "The mere lapse of years is not life. To eat, drink, and sleep—to be exposed to darkness and the light—to pace round in the mill of habit, and turn thought into an implement of trade—this is not life—knowledge, truth, love, beauty, goodness, faith, alone can give vitality to the mechanism of existence." Karsondas's life, though brief, was crowded with good and glorious actions and filled with noble risks and should be judged not by the years he lived, but by the praiseworthy deeds that he crowded in the short space of his life. All life is better for Karsondas's life that was lived in the world. He was one who literally gave his life to lofty ideals, and our hero Karsondas whom Bombay even after a hundred years holds in honour and reverence merits the recognition both of his countrymen and countrywomen.

In this world, in which we live, events are not finished when they have receded into the past. They persist in the texture of life and will stand until their complete significance is worked out to its final conclu-

sion, Nothing dies, not even life, which gives up one form only to resume another. No good action, no good example, dies. Karsondas's good example lives for ever in our race. His mortal remains have disappeared, but his deeds have left an indelible stamp and moulded the very thought and will of future generations. Time is not the measure of noble works. Karsondas's noblest thoughts were put into practice and will extend their fertilizing influence from generation to generation. Karsondas's heroic deeds with the Sun and the Moon will renew their light for ever.

The world is filled with the voices of the dead. The earth is filled with the labours of the dead. They live, whom we call dead. They live in our thoughts, they live in our blessings, they live in our life; death has no power over them. Is there no land of the blessed and the lovely ones; for such to live in? It cannot be that such die in God's counsel who live, in the frail human memory for ever!

The great want of the age is men—men like Karsondas, who are not for sale, men who are sound from centre to circumference, true to the heart's core, men who fear God, men who know their mission and tell it, men who know their place and fill it, men who are strong with the Divine strength, men with the wisdom which comes from above, and loving with the love of God.

Let not young men of India, without a trial, allow that others are greater than themselves. There is no crime more wilful and yet more common than this yielding up their place to others, whom they have obsequiously dubbed great, while they refuse to see their

own possible greatness, which is theirs, not in themselves, but in that they are God's. Great men lived on the same earth that they do, under the same skies, eating the same bread, sharing the same lot, suffering similar troubles, and were in every way surrounded by the same conditions as they are in. In fact they were only earnest editions of themselves. Young men should therefore live fully, up to the brim and grasp the full might of life to the uttermost.

I conclude this chapter by tendering to each and every young Indian, the most salutary advice not in my feeble words but the most eloquent words of India's best friend and lover, the late heavenly-hearted woman, Sister Nivedita :—

“The world is a school, a gymnasium for the soul. Humanity is not a great hall of mirrors, in which a single figure is reflected again and again, here well, and badly there. God yearns to achieve Himself supremely, and differently, in each one of us. All that we may take from the pattern-lives is the law that guided them, the aim for which they toiled,—Renunciation ! Renunciation ! Renunciation ! In the panoply of renunciation plunge thou into the ocean of the unknown. Accept the exigencies of thy time, the needs of thy place, as the material out of which the soul is to build its own boat for the great journey. Think not that it can copy exactly any that has gone before. To them, look only for the promise that where they have succeeded thou shalt not utterly fail. Then build and launch. Set out to find



—Thyself! And let thy going-forth be as a blaze of encouragement to those who have yet to depart!"

He serves his country best

Who lives pure life, and doeth righteous deed,  
And walks straight paths, however others stray,  
And leaves his sons as uttermost bequest  
A stainless record which all men may read.

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